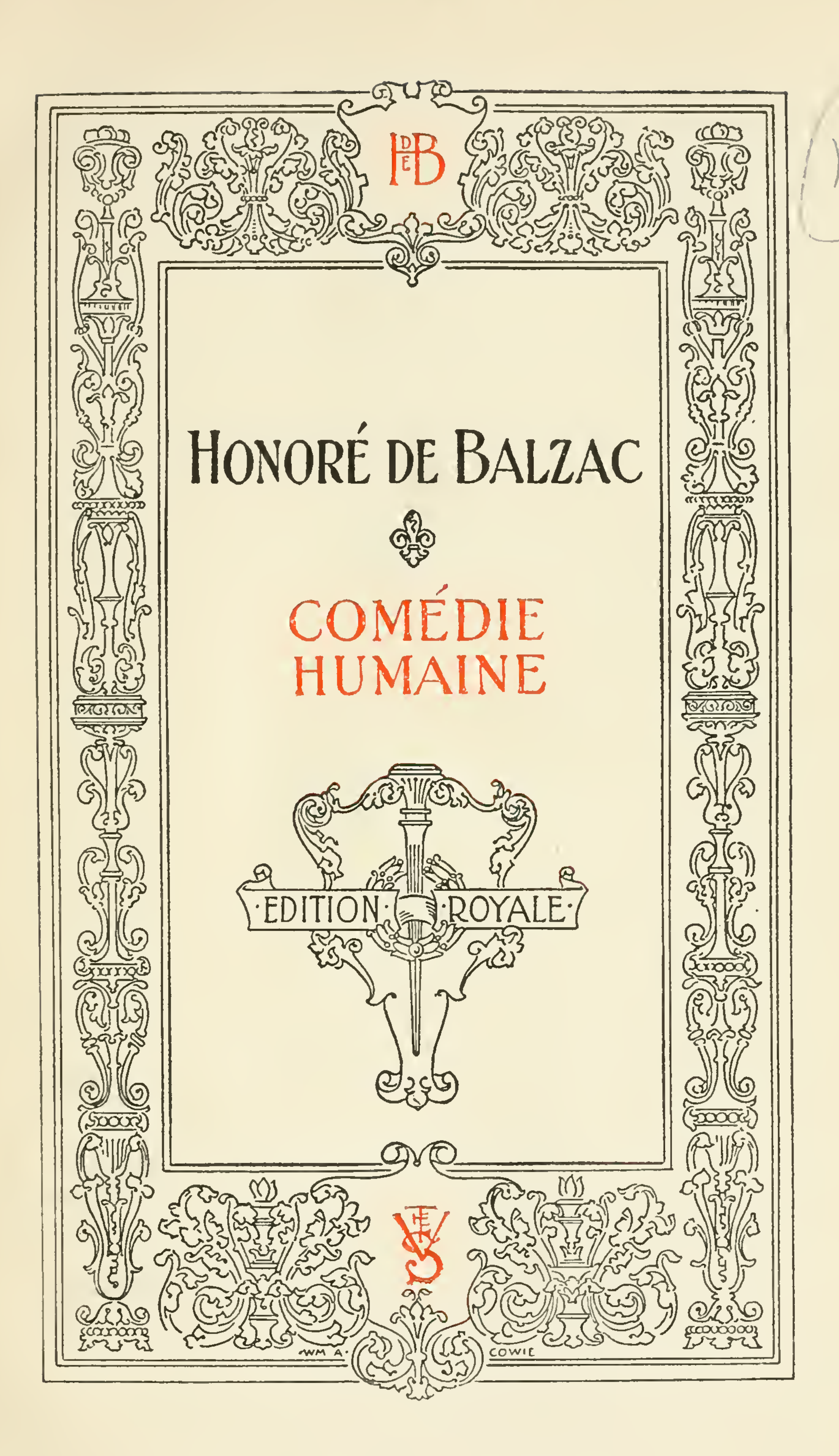
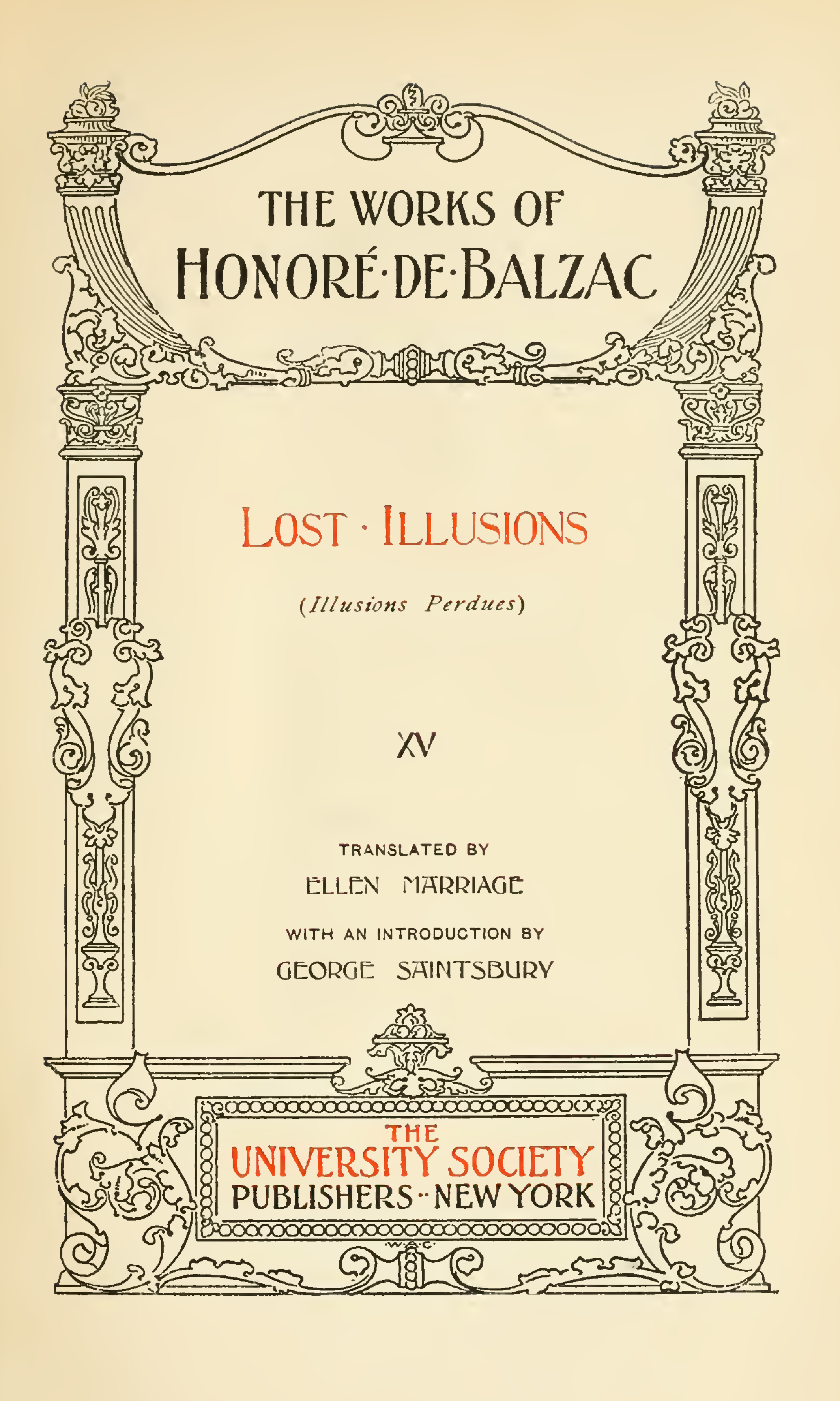

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THE WORKS OF
HONORÉ·DE·BALZAC

LOST · ILLUSIONS

(Illusions Perdues)

XV

TRANSLATED BY
ELLEN MARRIAGE

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
GEORGE SAINTSBURY

THE
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INTRODUCTION

The longest, without exception, of Balzac's books, and one which contains hardly any passage that is not very nearly of his best, *Illusions Perdues* suffers, I think, a little in point of composition from the mixture of the Angoulême scenes of its first and third parts with the purely Parisian interest of *Un Grand Homme de Province.* It is hardly possible to exaggerate the gain in distinctness and lucidity of arrangement derived from putting *Les Deux Poètes* and *Eve et David* (a much better title than that which has been preferred in the *Edition Définitive*) together in one volume, and reserving the greatness and decadence of Lucien de Rubempré for another. It is distinctly awkward that this should be divided, as it is itself an enormous episode, a sort of Herodotean parenthesis, rather than an integral part of the story. And, as a matter of fact, it joins on much more to the *Splendeurs et Misères des Courtesanes* than to its actual companions. In fact, it is an instance of the somewhat haphazard and arbitrary way in which the actual division of the *Comédie* has worked, that it should, dealing as it does wholly and solely with Parisian life, be put in the *Scènes de la Vie de Province,* and should be separated from its natural conclusion not merely as a matter of volumes, but as a matter of divisions. In making the arrangement, however, it is necessary to remember Balzac's own scheme, especially as the connection of the three parts in other ways is too close to permit the wrenching of them asunder altogether and finally. This caution given, all that is necessary can be done by devoting the intro-

duction of this volume entirely to the first and third or Angoulême parts, and by consecrating another preface at the beginning of the second volume to the egregious Lucien by himself.

There is a double gain in doing this, for, independently of the connection as above referred to, Lucien has little to do except as an opportunity for the display of virtue by his sister and David Séchard; and the parts in which they appear are among the most interesting of Balzac's work. The "idyllic" charm of this marriage for love, combined as it is with exhibitions of the author's power in more than one of the ways in which he loved best to show it, has never escaped attention from Balzac's most competent critics. He himself had speculated in print and paper before David Séchard was conceived; he himself had for all "maniacs," all men of one idea, the fraternal enthusiasm of a fellow-victim. He could never touch a miser without a sort of shudder of interest; and that singular fancy of his for describing complicated legal and commercial undertakings came in too. Nor did he spare, in this wide-ranging book, to bring in other favorite matters of his, the *hobereau*—or squireen—aristocracy, the tittle-tattle of the country town, and so forth.

The result is a book of multifarious interest, not hampered, as some of its fellows are, by an uncertainty on the author's part as to what particular hare he is coursing. Part of the interest, after the description of the printing office and of old Séchard's swindling of his son, is a doubling, it is true, upon that of *La Muse du Département,* and is perhaps a little less amusingly done; but it is blended with better matters. Sixte du Chatelet is a considerable addition to Balzac's gallery of the aristocracy in transition—of the Bonapartist *parve-*

nus whom perhaps he understood even better than the old nobility, for they were already in his time becoming adulterated and alloyed; or than the new folk of business and finance, for they were but in their earliest stages. Nor is the rest of the society of Madame de Bargeton inferior.

But the real interest both of *Les Deux Poètes,* and still more of *Eve et David,* between which two, be it always remembered, comes in the original the *Distinguished Provincial,* lies in the characters who gave their name to the last part. In David, the man of one idea, who yet has room for an honest love and an all-deserved friendship, Balzac could not go wrong. David Séchard takes a place by himself among the sheep of the *Comédie.* Some may indeed say that this phrase is unfortunate, that Balzac's sheep have more qualities of the mutton than innocence. It is not quite to be denied. But David is very far indeed from being a good imbecile, like César Birotteau, or a man intoxicated out of common-sense by a passion respectable in itself, like Goriot. His sacrifice of his mania in time is something—nay, it is very much; and his disinterested devotion to his brother-in-law does not quite pass the limits of sense.

But what shall we say of Eve? She is good, of course, good as gold, as Eugénie Grandet herself; and the novelist has been kind enough to allow her to be happier. But has he quite interested us in her love for David? Has he even persuaded us that the love existed in a form deserving the name? Did not Eve rather take her husband to protect him, to look after him, than either to love, honor, and obey in the orthodox sense, or to love for love's sake only, as some still take their husbands and wives even at the end of the nineteenth century? This is a question which each reader must answer for

himself; but few are likely to refuse assent to the sentence, "Happy the husband who has such a wife as Eve Chardon!"

The bibliography of this long and curious book—almost the only one which contains verse, some of Balzac's own, some given to him by his more poetical friends—occupies full ten pages of M. de Lovenjoul's record. The first part, which bore the general title, was a book from the beginning, and appeared in 1837 in the *Scènes de la Vie de Province.* It had five chapters, and the original verse it contained had appeared in the *Annales Romantiques* ten years earlier with slight variants. The second part, *Un Grand Homme de Province* likewise appeared as a book, independently published by Souverain in 1839 in two volumes and forty chapters. But two of these chapters had been inserted a few days before the publication in the *Estafette.* Here Canalis was more distinctly identified with Lamartine than in the subsequent texts. The third part, unlike its forerunners, appeared serially in two papers, *L'Etat* and *Le Parisien,* in the year 1843, under the title of *David Séchard, ou les Souffrances d'un Inventeur,* and next year became a book under the first title only. But before this last issue it had been united to the other two parts, and had appeared as *Eve et David* in the first edition of the *Comédie.* G. S.

LOST ILLUSIONS

To Monsieur Victor Hugo

It was your birthright to be, like a Rafael or a Pitt, a great poet at an age when other men are children; it was your fate, the fate of Chateaubriand and of every man of genius, to struggle against jealousy skulking behind the columns of a newspaper, or crouching in the subterranean places of journalism. For this reason I desired that your victorious name should help to win a victory for this work that I inscribe to you, a work which, if some persons are to be believed, is an act of courage as well as a veracious history. If there had been journalists in the time of Molière, who can doubt but that they, like marquises, financiers, doctors, and lawyers, would have been within the province of the writer of plays? And why should Comedy, *qui castigat ridendo mores,* make an exception in favor of one power, when the Parisian press spares none? I am happy, monsieur, in this opportunity of subscribing myself your sincere admirer and friend,

De Balzac.

PART I

TWO POETS.

At the time when this story opens, the Stanhope press and the ink-distributing roller were not as yet in general use in small provincial printing establishments. Even at Angoulême, so closely connected through its paper-mills with the art of typography in Paris, the only machinery in use was the primitive wooden invention to which the language owes a figure of speech—"the press groans" was no mere rhetorical

expression in those days. Leather ink-balls were still used in old-fashioned printing houses; the pressman dabbed the ink by hand on the characters, and the movable table on which the form of type was placed in readiness for the sheet of paper, being made of marble, literally deserved its name of "impression-stone." Modern machinery has swept all this old-world mechanism into oblivion; the wooden press which, with all its imperfections, turned out such beautiful work for the Elzevirs, Plantin, Aldus, and Didot is so completely forgotten, that something must be said as to the obsolete gear on which Jerome-Nicolas Séchard set an almost superstitious affection, for it plays a part in this chronicle of great small things.

Séchard had been in his time a journeyman pressman, a "bear" in compositors' slang. The continued pacing to and fro of the pressman from ink-table to press, from press to ink-table, no doubt suggested the nickname. The "bears," however, make matters even by calling the compositors monkeys, on account of the nimble industry displayed by those gentlemen in picking out the type from the hundred and fifty-two compartments of the cases.

In the disastrous year 1793, Séchard, being fifty years old and a married man, escaped the great Requisition which swept the bulk of French workmen into the army. The old pressman was the only hand left in the printing-house; and when the master (otherwise the "gaffer") died, leaving a widow, but no children, the business seemed to be on the verge of extinction; for the solitary "bear" was quite incapable of the feat of transformation into a "monkey," and in his quality of pressman had never learned to read or write. Just then, however, a Representative of the People being in a mighty hurry to publish the Decrees of the Convention, bestowed a master printer's license on Séchard, and requisitioned the establishment. Citizen Séchard accepted the dangerous patent, bought the business of his master's widow with his wife's savings, and took over the plant at half its value. But he was not even at the beginning. He was bound to print the

Decrees of the Republic without mistakes and without delay.

In this strait Jerome-Nicolas Séchard had the luck to discover a noble Marseillais who had no mind to emigrate and lose his lands, nor yet to show himself openly and lose his head, and consequently was fain to earn a living by some lawful industry. A bargain was struck. M. le Comte de Maucombe, disguised in a provincial printer's jacket, set up, read, and corrected the decrees which forbade citizens to harbor aristocrats under pain of death; while the "bear," now a "gaffer," printed the copies and duly posted them, and the pair remained safe and sound.

In 1795, when the squall of the Terror had passed over, Nicolas Séchard was obliged to look out for another jack-of-all-trades to be compositor, reader, and foreman in one; and an Abbé who declined the oath succeeded the Comte de Maucombe as soon as the First Consul restored public worship. The Abbé became a Bishop at the Restoration, and in after days the Count and the Abbé met and sat together on the same bench of the House of Peers.

In 1795 Jerome-Nicholas had not known how to read or write; in 1802 he had made no progress in either art; but by allowing a handsome margin for "wear and tear" in his estimates, he managed to pay a foreman's wages. The once easy-going journeyman was a terror to his "bears" and "monkeys." Where poverty ceases, avarice begins. From the day when Séchard first caught a glimpse of the possibility of making a fortune, a growing covetousness developed and sharpened in him a certain practical faculty for business—greedy, suspicious, and keen-eyed. He carried on his craft in disdain of theory. In course of time he had learned to estimate at a glance the cost of printing per page or per sheet in every kind of type. He proved to unlettered customers that large type costs more to move; or, if small type was under discussion, that it was more difficult to handle. The setting-up of the type was the one part of his craft of which he knew nothing; and so great was his terror lest he should not charge enough, that he always made a heavy profit. He never took his eyes

off his compositors while they were paid by the hour. If he knew that a paper manufacturer was in difficulties, he would buy up his stock at a cheap rate and warehouse the paper. So from this time forward he was his own landlord, and owned the old house which had been a printing office from time immemorial.

He had every sort of luck. He was left a widower with but one son. The boy he sent to the grammar school; he must be educated, not so much for his own sake as to train a successor to the business; and Séchard treated the lad harshly so as to prolong the time of parental rule, making him work at case on holidays, telling him that he must learn to earn his own living, so as to recompense his poor old father, who was slaving his life out to give him an education.

Then the Abbé went, and Séchard promoted one of his four compositors to be foreman, making his choice on the future bishop's recommendation of the man as an honest and intelligent workman. In these ways the worthy printer thought to tide over the time until his son could take a business which was sure to extend in young and clever hands.

David Séchard's school career was a brilliant one. Old Séchard, as a "bear" who had succeeded in life without any education, entertained a very considerable contempt for attainments in book learning; and when he sent his son to Paris to study the higher branches of typography, he recommended the lad so earnestly to save a good round sum in the "working man's paradise" (as he was pleased to call the city), and so distinctly gave the boy to understand that he was not to draw upon the paternal purse, that it seemed as if old Séchard saw some way of gaining private ends of his own by that sojourn in the Land of Sapience. So David learned his trade, and completed his education at the same time, and Didot's foreman became a scholar; and yet when he left Paris at the end of 1819, summoned home by his father to take the helm of business, he had not cost his parent a farthing.

Now Nicolas Séchard's establishment hitherto had enjoyed a monopoly of all the official printing in the department, be-

sides the work of the prefecture and the diocese—three connections which should prove mighty profitable to an active young printer; but precisely at this juncture the firm of Cointet Brothers, paper manufacturers, applied to the authorities for the second printer's license in Angoulême. Hitherto old Séchard had contrived to reduce this license to a dead letter, thanks to the war crisis of the Empire, and consequent atrophy of commercial enterprise; but he had neglected to buy up the right himself, and this piece of parsimony was the ruin of the old business. Séchard thought joyfully when he heard the news that the coming struggle with the Cointets would be fought out by his son and not by himself.

"I should have gone to the wall," he thought, "but a young fellow from the Didots will pull through."

The septuagenarian sighed for the time when he could live at ease in his own fashion. If his knowledge of the higher branches of the craft of printing was scanty, on the other hand, he was supposed to be past master of an art which workmen pleasantly call "tipple-ography," an art held in high esteem by the divine author of *Pantagruel;* though of late, by reason of the persecution of societies yclept of Temperance, the cult has fallen, day by day, into disuse.

Jerome-Nicolas Séchard, bound by the laws of etymology to be a dry subject, suffered from an inextinguishable thirst. His wife, during her lifetime, managed to control within reasonable bounds the passion for the juice of the grape, a taste so natural to the bear that M. de Chateaubriand remarked it among the ursine tribes of the New World. But philosophers inform us that old age is apt to revert to the habits of youth, and Séchard senior is a case in point—the older he grew, the better he loved to drink. The master-passion had given a stamp of originality to an ursine physiognomy; his nose had developed till it reached the proportions of a double great-canon A; his veined cheeks looked like vine-leaves, covered, as they were, with bloated patches of purple, madder red, and often mottled hues; till altogether, the countenance suggested a huge truffle clasped about by autumn vine tendrils. The

little gray eyes, peering out from beneath thick eyebrows like bushes covered with snow, were agleam with the cunning of avarice that had extinguished everything else in the man, down to the very instinct of fatherhood. Those eyes never lost their cunning even when disguised in drink. Séchard put you in mind of one of La Fontaine's Franciscan friars, with the fringe of grizzled hair still curling about his bald pate. He was short and corpulent, like one of the old-fashioned lamps for illumination, that burn a vast deal of oil to a very small piece of wick; for excess of any sort confirms the habit of body, and drunkenness, like much study, makes the fat man stouter, and the lean man leaner still.

For thirty years Jerome-Nicolas-Séchard had worn the famous municipal three-cornered hat, which you may still see here and there on the head of the towncrier in out-of-the-way places. His breeches and waistcoat were of greenish velveteen, and he wore an old-fashioned brown greatcoat, gray cotton stockings, and shoes with silver buckles to them. This costume, in which the workman shone through the burgess, was so thoroughly in keeping with the man's character, defects, and way of life, that he might have come ready dressed into the world. You could no more imagine him apart from his clothes than you could think of a bulb without its husk. If the old printer had not long since given the measure of his blind greed, the very nature of the man came out in the manner of his abdication.

Knowing, as he did, that his son must have learned his business pretty thoroughly in the great school of the Didots, he had yet been ruminating for a long while over the bargain that he meant to drive with David. All that the father made, the son, of course, was bound to lose, but in business this worthy knew nothing of father or son. If, in the first instance, he had looked on David as his only child, later he came to regard him as the natural purchaser of the business, whose interests were therefore opposed to his own. Séchard meant to sell dear; David, of course, to buy cheap; his son, therefore, was an antagonist, and it was his duty to get the

better of him. The transformation of sentiment into self-seeking, ordinarily slow, tortuous, and veiled by hypocrisy in better educated people, was swift and direct in the old "bear," who demonstrated the superiority of shrewd tipple-ography over book-learned typography.

David came home, and the old man received him with all the cordiality which cunning folk can assume with an eye to business. He was as full of thought for him as any lover for his mistress; giving him his arm, telling him where to put his foot down so as to avoid the mud, warming the bed for him, lighting a fire in his room, making supper ready. The next day, after he had done his best to fluster his son's wits over a sumptuous dinner, Jerome-Nicolas Séchard, after copious potations, began with a "Now for business," a remark so singularly misplaced between two hiccoughs, that David begged his parent to postpone serious matters until the morrow. But the old "bear" was by no means inclined to put off the long-expected battle; he was too well prepared to turn his tipsiness to good account. He had dragged the chain these fifty years, he would not wear it another hour; to-morrow his son should be the "gaffer."

Perhaps a word or two about the business premises may be said here. The printing-house had been established since the reign of Louis XIV. in the angle made by the Rue de Beaulieu and the Place du Mûrier; it had been devoted to its present purposes for a long time past. The ground floor consisted of a single huge room lighted on the side next the street by an old-fashioned casement, and by a large sash window that gave upon the yard at the back. A passage at the side led to the private office; but in the provinces the processes of typography excite such a lively interest, that customers usually preferred to enter by way of the glass door in the street front, though they at once descended three steps, for the floor of the workshop lay below the level of the street. The gaping newcomer always failed to note the perils of the passage through the shop; and while staring at the sheets of paper strung in groves across the ceiling, ran against the rows of cases, or

knocked his hat against the tie-bars that secured the presses in position. Or the customer's eyes would follow the agile movements of a compositor, picking out type from the hundred and fifty-two compartments of his case, reading his copy, verifying the words in the composing-stick, and leading the lines, till a ream of damp paper weighted with heavy slabs, and set down in the middle of the gangway, tripped up the bemused spectator, or he caught his hip against the angle of a bench, to the huge delight of boys, "bears," and "monkeys." No wight had ever been known to reach the further end without accident. A couple of glass-windowed cages had been built out into the yard at the back; the foreman sat in state in the one, the master printer in the other. Out in the yard the walls were agreeably decorated by trellised vines, a tempting bit of color, considering the owner's reputation. On the one side of the space stood the kitchen, on the other the woodshed, and in a ramshackle penthouse against the hall at the back, the paper was trimmed and damped down. Here, too, the forms, or, in ordinary language, the masses of set-up type, were washed. Inky streams issuing thence blended with the ooze from the kitchen sink, and found their way into the kennel in the street outside; till peasants coming into the town of a market day believed that the Devil was taking a wash inside the establishment.

As to the house above the printing office, it consisted of three rooms on the first floor and a couple of attics in the roof. The first room did duty as dining-room and lobby; it was exactly the same length as the passage below, less the space taken up by the old-fashioned wooden staircase; and was lighted by a narrow casement on the street and a bull's-eye window looking into the yard. The chief characteristic of the apartment was a cynic simplicity, due to money-making greed. The bare walls were covered with plain whitewash, the dirty brick floor had never been scoured, the furniture consisted of three rickety chairs, a round table, and a sideboard stationed between the two doors of a bedroom and a sitting-room. Windows and doors alike were dingy with accumulated grime.

Reams of blank paper or printed matter usually encumbered the floor, and more frequently than not the remains of Séchard's dinner, empty bottles and plates, were lying about on the packages.

The bedroom was lighted on the side of the yard by a window with leaded panes, and hung with the old-world tapestry that decorated house fronts in provincial towns on Corpus Christi Day. For furniture it boasted a vast four-post bedstead with canopy, valances and quilt of crimson serge, a couple of worm-eaten armchairs, two tapestry-covered chairs in walnut wood, an aged bureau, and a timepiece on the mantel-shelf. The Seigneur Rouzeau, Jerome-Nicolas' master and predecessor, had furnished the homely old-world room; it was just as he had left it.

The sitting-room had been partly modernized by the late Mme. Séchard; the walls were adorned with a wainscot, fearful to behold, painted the color of powder blue. The panels were decorated with wall-paper—Oriental scenes in sepia tint—and for all furniture, half-a-dozen chairs with lyre-shaped backs and blue leather cushions were ranged round the room. The two clumsy arched windows that gave upon the Place du Mûrier were curtainless; there was neither clock nor candle sconce nor mirror above the mantel-shelf, for Mme. Séchard had died before she carried out her scheme of decoration; and the "bear," unable to conceive the use of improvements that brought in no return in money, had left it at this point.

Hither, *pede titubante,* Jerome-Nicolas Séchard brought his son, and pointed to a sheet of paper lying on the table—a valuation of plant drawn up by the foreman under his direction.

"Read that, my boy," said Jerome-Nicolas, rolling a drunken eye from the paper to his son, and back again to the paper. "You will see what a jewel of a printing-house I am giving you."

" 'Three wooden presses, held in position by iron tie-bars, cast-iron plates——' "

"An improvement of my own," put in Séchard senior.

"'——Together with all the implements, ink-tables, balls, benches, et cetera, sixteen hundred francs!' Why, father," cried David, letting the sheet fall, "these presses of yours are old sabots not worth a hundred crowns; they are only fit for firewood."

"Sabots?" cried old Séchard, "*Sabots?* There, take the inventory and let us go downstairs. You will soon see whether your paltry iron-work contrivances will work like these solid old tools, tried and trusty. You will not have the heart after that to slander honest old presses that go like mail coaches, and are good to last you your lifetime without needing repairs of any sort. Sabots! Yes, sabots that are like to hold salt enough to cook our eggs with—sabots that your father has plodded on with these twenty years; they have helped him to make you what you are."

The father, without coming to grief on the way, lurched down the worn, knotty staircase that shook under his tread. In the passage he opened the door of the workshop, flew to the nearest press (artfully oiled and cleaned for the occasion) and pointed out the strong oaken cheeks, polished up by the apprentice.

"Isn't it a love of a press?"

A wedding announcement lay in the press. The old "bear" folded down the frisket upon the tympan, and the tympan upon the form, ran in the carriage, worked the lever, drew out the carriage, and lifted the frisket and tympan, all with as much agility as the youngest of the tribe. The press, handled in this sort, creaked aloud in such fine style that you might have thought that some bird had dashed itself against the window pane and flown away again.

"Where is the English press that could go at that pace?" the parent asked of his astonished son.

Old Séchard hurried to the second, and then to the third in order, repeating the manœuvre with equal dexterity. The third presenting to his wine-troubled eye a patch overlooked by the apprentice, with a notable oath he rubbed it with the skirt of his overcoat, much as a horse-dealer polishes the coat of an animal that he is trying to sell.



"With these three presses, David, you can make your nine thousand francs a year without a foreman. As your future partner, I am opposed to your replacing these presses by your cursed cast-iron machinery, that wears out the type. You in Paris have been making such a to-do over that damned Englishman's invention—a foreigner, an enemy of France who wants to help the ironfounders to a fortune. Oh! you wanted Stanhopes, did you? Thanks for your Stanhopes, that cost two thousand five hundred francs apiece, about twice as much as my three jewels put together, and maul your type to pieces, because there is no give in them. I haven't book-learning like you, but you keep this well in mind, the life of the Stanhope is the death of the type. Those three presses will serve your turn well enough, the printing will be properly done, and folk here in Angoulême won't ask any more of you. You may print with presses made of wood or iron or gold or silver, *they* will never pay you a farthing more."

"'Item,'" pursued David, "'five thousand pounds weight of type from M. Vaflard's foundry——'" Didot's apprentice could not help smiling at the name.

"Laugh away! After twelve years of wear, that type is as good as new. That is what I call a typefounder! M. Vaflard is an honest man, who uses hard metal; and, to my way of thinking, the best typefounder is the one you go to most seldom."

"'——Taken at ten thousand francs,'" continued David. "Ten thousand francs, father! Why, that is two francs a pound, and the Messrs. Didot only ask thirty-six sous for their *Cicero!* These nail-heads of yours will only fetch the price of old metal—fivepence a pound."

"You call M. Gillé's italics, running-hand and round-hand, 'nail-heads,' do you? M. Gillé, that used to be printer to the Emperor! And type that cost six francs a pound! masterpieces of engraving, bought only five years ago. Some of them are as bright yet as when they came from the foundry. Look here!"

Old Séchard pounced upon some packets of unused sorts, and held them out for David to see.

"I am not book-learned; I don't know how to read or write; but, all the same, I know enough to see that M. Gillé's sloping letters are the fathers of your Messrs. Didot's English running-hand. Here is the round-hand," he went on, taking up an unused pica type.

David saw that there was no way of coming to terms with his father. It was a case of Yes or No—of taking or leaving it. The very ropes across the ceiling had gone down into the old "bear's" inventory, and not the smallest item was omitted; jobbing chases, wetting-boards, paste-pots, rinsing-trough, and lye-brushes had all been put down and valued separately with miserly exactitude. The total amounted to thirty thousand francs, including the license and the goodwill. David asked himself whether or not this thing were feasible.

Old Séchard grew uneasy over his son's silence; he would rather have had stormy argument than a wordless acceptance of the situation. Chaffering in these sorts of bargains means that a man can look after his interests. "A man who is ready to pay you anything you ask will pay nothing," old Séchard was saying to himself. While he tried to follow his son's train of thought, he went through the list of odds and ends of plant needed by a country business, drawing David now to a hot-press, now to a cutting-press, bragging of its usefulness and sound condition.

"Old tools are always the best tools," said he. "In our line of business they ought to fetch more than the new, like goldbeaters' tools."

Hideous vignettes, representing Hymen and Cupids, skeletons raising the lids of their tombs to describe a V or an M, and huge borders of masks for theatrical posters became in turn objects of tremendous value through old Jerome-Nicolas' vinous eloquence. Old custom, he told his son, was so deeply rooted in the district that he (David) would only waste his pains if he gave them the finest things in life. He himself had tried to sell them a better class of almanac than the *Double Liégeois* on grocers' paper; and what came of it?—the original *Double Liégeois* sold better than the most

sumptuous calendars. David would soon see the importance of these old-fashioned things when he found he could get more for them than for the most costly new-fangled articles.

"Aha! my boy, Paris is Paris, and the provinces are the provinces. If a man came in from L'Houmeau with an order for wedding cards, and you were to print them without a Cupid and garlands, he would not believe that he was properly married; you would have them all back again if you sent them out with a plain M on them after the style of your Messrs. Didot. They may be fine printers, but their inventions won't take in the provinces for another hundred years. So there you are."

A generous man is a bad bargain-driver. David's nature was of the sensitive and affectionate type that shrinks from a dispute, and gives way at once if an opponent touches his feelings. His loftiness of feeling, and the fact that the old toper had himself well in hand, put him still further at a disadvantage in a dispute about money matters with his own father, especially as he credited that father with the best intentions, and took his covetous greed for a printer's attachment to his old familiar tools. Still, as Jerome-Nicolas Séchard had taken the whole place over from Rouzeau's widow for ten thousand francs, paid in assignats, it stood to reason that thirty thousand francs in coin at the present day was an exorbitant demand.

"Father, you are cutting my throat!" exclaimed David.

"*I*," cried the old toper, raising his hand to the lines of cord across the ceiling, "I who gave you life? Why, David, what do you suppose the license is worth? Do you know that the sheet of advertisements alone, at fivepence a line, brought in five hundred francs last month? You turn up the books, lad, and see what we make by placards and the registers at the Prefecture, and the work for the mayor's office, and the bishop too. You are a do-nothing that has no mind to get on. You are haggling over the horse that will carry you to some pretty bit of property like Marsac."

Attached to the valuation of plant there was a deed of part-

nership between Séchard senior and his son. The good father was to let his house and premises to the new firm for twelve hundred francs per annum, reserving one of the two rooms in the roof for himself. So long as David's purchase-money was not paid in full, the profits were to be divided equally; as soon as he paid off his father, he was to be made sole proprietor of the business.

David made a mental calculation of the value of the license, the goodwill, and the stock of paper, leaving the plant out of account. It was just possible, he thought, to clear off the debt. He accepted the conditions. Old Séchard, accustomed to peasants' haggling, knowing nothing of the wider business views of Paris, was amazed at such a prompt conclusion.

"Can he have been putting money by?" he asked himself. "Or is he scheming out, at this moment, some way of not paying me?"

With this notion in his head, he tried to find out whether David had any money with him; he wanted to be paid something on account. The old man's inquisitiveness roused his son's distrust; David remained close buttoned up to the chin.

Next day, old Séchard made the apprentice move all his own household stuff up into the attic until such time as an empty market cart could take it out on the return journey into the country; and David entered into possession of three bare, unfurnished rooms on the day that saw him installed in the printing-house, without one sou wherewith to pay his men's wages. When he asked his father, as a partner, to contribute his share towards the working expenses, the old man pretended not to understand. He had found the printing-house, he said, and he was not bound to find the money too. He had paid his share. Pressed close by his son's reasoning, he answered that when he himself had paid Rouzeau's widow he had not had a penny left. If he, a poor, ignorant working man, had made his way, Didot's apprentice should do still better. Besides, had not David been earning money, thanks to an education paid for by the sweat of his old father's brow? Now surely was the time when the education would come in useful.

"What have you done with your 'polls?'" he asked, returning to the charge. He meant to have light on a problem which his son left unresolved the day before.

"Why, had I not to live?" David asked indignantly, "and books to buy besides?"

"Oh! you bought books, did you? You will make a poor man of business. A man that buys books is hardly fit to print them," retorted the "bear."

Then David endured the most painful of humiliations—the sense of shame for a parent; there was nothing for it but to be passive while his father poured out a flood of reasons—sordid, whining, contemptible, money-getting reasons—in which the niggardly old man wrapped his refusal. David crushed down his pain into the depths of his soul; he saw that he was alone; saw that he had no one to look to but himself; saw, too, that his father was trying to make money out of him; and in a spirit of philosophical curiosity, he tried to find out how far the old man would go. He called old Séchard's attention to the fact that he had never as yet made any inquiry as to his mother's fortune; if that fortune would not buy the printing-house, it might go some way towards paying the working expenses.

"Your mother's fortune?" echoed old Séchard; "why, it was her beauty and intelligence!"

David understood his father thoroughly after that answer; he understood that only after an interminable, expensive, and disgraceful lawsuit could he obtain any account of the money which by rights was his. The noble heart accepted the heavy burden laid upon it, seeing clearly beforehand how difficult it would be to free himself from the engagements into which he had entered with his father.

"I will work," he said to himself. "After all, if I have a rough time of it, so had the old man; besides, I shall be working for myself, shall I not?"

"I am leaving you a treasure," said Séchard, uneasy at his son's silence.

David asked what the treasure might be.

"Marion!" said his father.

Marion, a big country girl, was an indispensable part of the establishment. It was Marion who damped the paper and cut it to size; Marion did the cooking, washing, and marketing; Marion unloaded the paper carts, collected accounts, and cleaned the ink-balls; and if Marion had but known how to read, old Séchard would have put her to set up type into the bargain.

Old Séchard set out on foot for the country. Delighted as he was with his sale of the business, he was not quite easy in his mind as to the payment. To the throes of the vendor, the agony of uncertainty as to the completion of the purchase inevitably succeeds. Passion of every sort is essentially jesuitical. Here was a man who thought that education was useless, forcing himself to believe in the influence of education. He was mortgaging thirty thousand francs upon the ideas of honor and conduct which education should have developed in his son; David had received a good training, so David would sweat blood and water to fulfil his engagements; David's knowledge would discover new resources; and David seemed to be full of fine feelings, so—David would pay! Many a parent does in this way, and thinks that he has acted a father's part; old Séchard was quite of that opinion by the time that he reached his vineyard at Marsac, a hamlet some four leagues out of Angoulême. The previous owner had built a nice little house on the bit of property, and from year to year had added other bits of land to it, until in 1809 the old "bear" bought the whole, and went thither, exchanging the toil of the printing press for the labor of the winepress. As he put it himself, "he had been in that line so long that he ought to know something about it."

During the first twelvemonth of rural retirement, Séchard senior showed a careful countenance among his vine props; for he was always in his vineyard now, just as, in the old days, he had lived in his shop, day in, day out. The prospect of thirty thousand francs was even more intoxicating than sweet

wine; already in imagination he fingered the coin. The less the claim to the money, the more eager he grew to pouch it. Not seldom his anxieties sent him hurrying from Marsac to Angoulême; he would climb up the rocky staircases into the old city and walk into his son's workshop to see how business went. There stood the presses in their places; the one apprentice, in a paper cap, was cleaning the ink-balls; there was a creaking of a press over the printing of some trade circular, the old type was still unchanged, and in the dens at the end of the room he saw his son and the foreman reading books, which the "bear" took for proof-sheets. Then he would join David at dinner and go back to Marsac, chewing the cud of uneasy reflection.

Avarice, like love, has the gift of second sight, instinctively guessing at future contingencies, and hugging its presentiments. Séchard senior living at a distance, far from the workshop and the machinery which possessed such a fascination for him, reminding him, as it did, of days when he was making his way, could *feel* that there were disquieting symptoms of inactivity in his son. The name of Cointet Brothers haunted him like a dread; he saw Séchard & Son dropping into the second place. In short, the old man scented misfortune in the wind.

His presentiments were too well founded; disaster was hovering over the house of Séchard. But there is a tutelary deity for misers, and by a chain of unforeseen circumstances that tutelary deity was so ordering matters that the purchase-money of his extortionate bargain was to be tumbled after all into the old toper's pouch.

Indifferent to the religious reaction brought about by the Restoration, indifferent no less to the Liberal movement, David preserved a most unlucky neutrality on the burning questions of the day. In those times provincial men of business were bound to profess political opinions of some sort if they meant to secure custom; they were forced to choose for themselves between the patronage of the Liberals on the one hand or the Royalists on the other. And Love, moreover, had come

to David's heart, and with his scientific preoccupation and finer nature he had not room for the dogged greed of which your successful man of business is made; it choked the keen money-getting instinct which would have led him to study the differences between the Paris trade and the business of a provincial printing-house. The shades of opinion so sharply defined in the country are blurred and lost in the great currents of Parisian business life. Cointet Brothers set themselves deliberately to assimilate all shades of monarchical opinion. They let every one know that they fasted of a Friday and kept Lent; they haunted the cathedral; they cultivated the society of the clergy; and in consequence, when books of devotion were once more in demand, Cointet Brothers were the first in this lucrative field. They slandered David, accusing him of Liberalism, Atheism, and what not. How, asked they, could any one employ a man whose father had been a Septembrist, a Bonapartist, and a drunkard to boot? The old man was sure to leave plenty of gold pieces behind him. They themselves were poor men with families to support, while David was a bachelor and could do as he pleased; he would have plenty one of these days; he could afford to take things easily; whereas . . . and so forth and so forth.

Such tales against David, once put into circulation, produced their effect. The monopoly of the prefectorial and diocesan work passed gradually into the hands of Cointet Brothers; and before long David's keen competitors, emboldened by his inaction, started a second local sheet of advertisements and announcements. The older establishment was left at length with the job-printing orders from the town, and the circulation of the *Charente Chronicle* fell off by one-half. Meanwhile the Cointets grew richer; they had made handsome profits on their devotional books; and now they offered to buy Séchard's paper, to have all the trade and judicial announcements of the department in their own hands.

The news of this proposal sent by David to his father brought the old vinegrower from Marsac into the Place du

Mûrier with the swiftness of the raven that scents the corpses on a battlefield.

"Leave me to manage the Cointets," said he to his son; "don't you meddle in this business."

The old man saw what the Cointets meant; and they took alarm at his clearsighted sagacity. His son was making a blunder, he said, and he, Séchard, had come to put a stop to it.

"What was to become of the connection if David gave up the paper? It all depended upon the paper. All the attorneys and solicitors and men of business in L'Houmeau were Liberals to a man. The Cointets had tried to ruin the Séchards by accusing them of Liberalism, and by so doing gave them a plank to cling to—the Séchards should keep the Liberal business. Sell the paper indeed! Why, you might as well sell the stock-in-trade and the license!"

Old Séchard asked the Cointets sixty thousand francs for the printing business, so as not to ruin his son; he was fond of his son; he was taking his son's part. The vinegrower brought his son to the front to gain his point, as a peasant brings in his wife.

His son was unwilling to do this, that, or the other; it varied according to the offers which he wrung one after another from the Cointets, until, not without an effort, he drew them on to give twenty-two thousand francs for the *Charente Chronicle*. But, at the same time, David must pledge himself thenceforward to print no newspaper whatsoever, under a penalty of thirty thousand francs for damages.

That transaction dealt the deathblow to the Séchard establishment; but the old vinegrower did not trouble himself much on that head. Murder usually follows robbery. Our worthy friend intended to pay himself with the ready money. To have the cash in his own hands he would have given in David himself over and above the bargain, and so much the more willingly since that this nuisance of a son could claim one-half of the unexpected windfall. Taking this fact into consideration, therefore, the generous parent consented to

abandon his share of the business, but not the business premises; and the rental was still maintained at the famous sum of twelve hundred francs per annum.

The old man came into town very seldom after the paper was sold to the Cointets. He pleaded his advanced age, but the truth was that he took little interest in the establishment now that it was his no longer. Still, he could not quite shake off his old kindness for his stock-in-trade; and when business brought him into Angoulême, it would have been hard to say which was the stronger attraction to the old house—his wooden presses or the son whom (as a matter of form) he asked for rent. The old foreman, who had gone over to the rival establishment, knew exactly how much this fatherly generosity was worth; the old fox meant to reserve a right to interfere in his son's affairs, and had taken care to appear in the bankruptcy as a privileged creditor for arrears of rent.

The causes of David's heedlessness throw a light on the character of that young man. Only a few days after his establishment in the paternal printing office, he came across an old school friend in the direst poverty. Lucien Chardon, a young fellow of one-and-twenty or thereabouts, was the son of a surgeon-major who had retired with a wound from the republican army. Nature had meant M. Chardon senior for a chemist; chance opened the way for a retail druggist's business in Angoulême. After many years of scientific research, death cut him off in the midst of his incompleted experiments, and the great discovery that should have brought wealth to the family was never made. Chardon had tried to find a specific for the gout. Gout is a rich man's malady; the rich will pay large sums to recover health when they have lost it, and for this reason the druggist deliberately selected gout as his problem. Halfway between the man of science on the one side and the charlatan on the other, he saw that the scientific method was the one road to assured success, and had studied the causes of the complaint, and based his remedy on a certain general theory of treatment, with modifications in practice for varying temperaments. Then, on a visit to Paris undertaken to

solicit the approval of the *Académie des Sciences,* he died, and lost all the fruits of his labors.

It may have been that some presentiment of the end had led the country druggist to do all that in him lay to give his boy and girl a good education; the family had been living up to the income brought in by the business; and now when they were left almost destitute, it was an aggravation of their misfortune that they had been brought up in the expectations of a brilliant future; for these hopes were extinguished by their father's death. The great Desplein, who attended Chardon in his last illness, saw him die in convulsions of rage.

The secret of the army surgeon's ambition lay in his passionate love for his wife, the last survivor of the family of Rubempré, saved as by a miracle from the guillotine in 1793. He had gained time by declaring that she was pregnant, a lie told without the girl's knowledge or consent. Then, when in a manner he had created a claim to call her his wife, he had married her in spite of their common poverty. The children of this marriage, like all children of love, inherited the mother's wonderful beauty, that gift so often fatal when accompanied by poverty. The life of hope and hard work and despair, in all of which Mme. Chardon had shared with such keen sympathy, had left deep traces in her beautiful face, just as the slow decline of a scanty income had changed her ways and habits; but both she and her children confronted evil days bravely enough. She sold the druggist's shop in the Grand' Rue de L'Houmeau, the principal suburb of Angoulême; but it was impossible for even one woman to exist on the three hundred francs of income brought in by the investment of the purchase-money, so the mother and daughter accepted the position, and worked to earn a living. The mother went out as a monthly nurse, and for her gentle manners was preferred to any other among the wealthy houses, where she lived without expense to her children, and earned some seven francs a week. To save her son the embarrassment of seeing his mother reduced to this humble position, she assumed the name of Madame Charlotte; and persons requiring

her services were requested to apply to M. Postel, M. Chardon's successor in the business. Lucien's sister worked for a laundress, a decent woman much respected in L'Houmeau, and earned fifteen daily sous. As Mme. Prieur's forewoman she had a certain position in the workroom, which raised her slightly above the class of working-girls.

The two women's slender earnings, together with Mme. Chardon's three hundred francs of *rentes,* amounted to about eight hundred francs a year, and on this sum three persons must be fed, clothed, and lodged. Yet, with all their frugal thrift, the pittance was scarcely sufficient; nearly the whole of it was needed for Lucien. Mme. Chardon and her daughter Eve believed in Lucien as Mahomet's wife believed in her husband; their devotion for his future knew no bounds. Their present landlord was the successor to the business, for M. Postel let them have rooms at the further end of a yard at the back of the laboratory for a very low rent, and Lucien slept in the poor garret above. A father's passion for natural science had stimulated the boy, and at first induced him to follow in the same path. Lucien was one of the most brilliant pupils at the grammar school of Angoulême, and when David Séchard left, his future friend was in the third form.

When chance brought the school-fellows together again, Lucien was weary of drinking from the rude cup of penury, and ready for any of the rash, decisive steps that youth takes at the age of twenty. David's generous offer of forty francs a month if Lucien would come to him and learn the work of a printer's reader came in time; David had no need whatever of a printer's reader, but he saved Lucien from despair. The ties of a school friendship thus renewed were soon drawn closer than ever by the similarity of their lot in life and the dissimilarity of their characters. Both felt high swelling hopes of manifold success; both consciously possessed the high order of intelligence which sets a man on a level with lofty heights, consigned though they were socially to the lowest level. Fate's injustice was a strong bond between them. And then, by different ways, following each his own bent of mind, they

had attained to poesy. Lucien, destined for the highest speculative fields of natural science, was aiming with hot enthusiasm at fame through literature; while David, with that meditative temperament which inclines to poetry, was drawn by his tastes towards natural science.

The exchange of rôles was the beginning of an intellectual comradeship. Before long, Lucien told David of his own father's farsighted views of the application of science to manufacture, while David pointed out the new ways in literature that Lucien must follow if he meant to succeed. Not many days had passed before the young men's friendship became a passion such as is only known in early manhood. Then it was that David caught a glimpse of Eve's fair face, and loved, as grave and meditative natures can love. The *et nunc et semper et in secula seculorum* of the Liturgy is the device taken by many a sublime unknown poet, whose works consist in magnificent epics conceived and lost between heart and heart. With a lover's insight, David read the secret hopes set by the mother and sister on Lucien's poet's brow; and knowing their blind devotion, it was very sweet to him to draw nearer to his love by sharing her hopes and her self-sacrifice. And in this way Lucien came to be David's chosen brother. As there are ultras who would fain be more Royalist than the King, so David outdid the mother and sister in his belief in Lucien's genius; he spoiled Lucien as a mother spoils her child.

Once, under pressure of the lack of money which tied their hands, the two were ruminating after the manner of young men over ways of promptly realizing a large fortune; and, after fruitless shakings of all the trees already stripped by previous comers, Lucien bethought himself of two of his father's ideas. M. Chardon had talked of a method of refining sugar by a chemical process, which would reduce the cost of production by one-half; and he had another plan for employing an American vegetable fibre for making paper, something after the Chinese fashion, and effecting an enormous saving in the cost of raw material. David, knowing the importance of a question raised already by the Didots, caught

at this latter notion, saw a fortune in it, and looked upon Lucien as a benefactor whom he could never repay.

Any one may guess how the ruling thoughts and inner life of this pair of friends unfitted them for carrying on the business of a printing house. So far from making fifteen to twenty thousand francs, like Cointet Brothers, printers and publishers to the diocese, and proprietors of the *Charente Chronicle* (now the only newspaper in the department)—Séchard & Son made a bare three hundred francs per month, out of which the foreman's salary must be paid, as well as Marion's wages and the rent and taxes; so that David himself was scarcely making twelve hundred francs per annum. Active and industrious men of business would have bought new type and new machinery, and made an effort to secure orders for cheap printing from the Paris book trade; but master and foreman, deep in absorbing intellectual interests, were quite content with such orders as came to them from their remaining customers.

In the long length the Cointets had come to understand David's character and habits. They did not slander him now; on the contrary, wise policy required that they should allow the business to flicker on; it was to their interest indeed to maintain it in a small way, lest it should fall into the hands of some more formidable competitor; they made a practice of sending prospectuses and circulars—job-printing, as it is called—to the Séchard's establishment. So it came about that, all unwittingly, David owed his existence, commercially speaking, to the cunning schemes of his competitors. The Cointets, well pleased with his "craze," as they called it, behaved to all appearance both fairly and handsomely; but, as a matter of fact, they were adopting the tactics of the mail-coach owners who set up a sham opposition coach to keep *bonâ fide* rivals out of the field.

Inside and outside, the condition of the Séchard printing establishment bore testimony to the sordid avarice of the old "bear," who never spent a penny on repairs. The old house

had stood in sun and rain, and borne the brunt of the weather, till it looked like some venerable tree trunk set down at the entrance of the alley, so riven it was with seams and cracks of all sorts and sizes. The house front, built of brick and stone, with no pretensions to symmetry, seemed to be bending beneath the weight of a worm-eaten roof covered with the curved pantiles in common use in the South of France. The decrepit casements were fitted with the heavy, unwieldy shutters necessary in that climate, and held in place by massive iron cross bars. It would have puzzled you to find a more dilapidated house in Angoulême; nothing but sheer tenacity of mortar kept it together. Try to picture the workshop, lighted at either end, and dark in the middle; the walls covered with handbills and begrimed by friction of all the workmen who had rubbed past them for thirty years; the cobweb of cordage across the ceiling, the stacks of paper, the old-fashioned presses, the pile of slabs for weighting the damp sheets, the rows of cases, and the two dens in the far corners where the master printer and foreman sat—and you will have some idea of the life led by the two friends.

One day early in May, 1821, David and Lucien were standing together by the window that looked into the yard. It was nearly two o'clock, and the four or five men were going out to dinner. David waited until the apprentice had shut the street door with the bell fastened to it; then he drew Lucien out into the yard as if the smell of paper, ink, and presses and old woodwork had grown intolerable to him, and together they sat down under the vines, keeping the office and the door in view. The sunbeams, playing among the trellised vine-shoots, hovered over the two poets, making, as it were, an aureole about their heads, bringing the contrast between their faces and their characters into a vigorous relief that would have tempted the brush of some great painter.

David's physique was of the kind that Nature gives to the fighter, the man born to struggle in obscurity, or with the eyes of all men turned upon him. The strong shoulders, rising above the broad chest, were in keeping with the full develop-

ment of his whole frame. With his thick crop of black hair, his fleshy, high-colored, swarthy face, supported by a thick neck, he looked at first sight like one of Boileau's canons; but on a second glance there was that in the lines about the thick lips, in the dimple of the chin, in the turn of the square nostrils, with the broad irregular line of central cleavage, and, above all, in the eyes, with the steady light of an all-absorbing love that burned in them, which revealed the real character of the man—the wisdom of the thinker, the strenuous melancholy of a spirit that discerns the horizon on either side, and sees clearly to the end of winding ways, turning the clear light of analysis upon the joys of fruition, known as yet in idea alone, and quick to turn from them in disgust. You might look for the flash of genius from such a face; you could not miss the ashes of the volcano; hopes extinguished beneath a profound sense of the social annihilation to which lowly birth and lack of fortune condemns so many a loftier mind. And by the side of the poor printer, who loathed a handicraft so closely allied to intellectual work, close to this Silenus, joyless, self-sustained, drinking deep draughts from the cup of knowledge and of poetry that he might forget the cares of his narrow lot in the intoxication of soul and brain, stood Lucien, graceful as some sculptured Indian Bacchus.

For in Lucien's face there was the distinction of line which stamps the beauty of the antique; the Greek profile, with the velvet whiteness of women's faces, and eyes full of love, eyes so blue that they looked dark against a pearly setting, and dewy and fresh as those of a child. Those beautiful eyes looked out from under their long chestnut lashes, beneath eyebrows that might have been traced by a Chinese pencil. The silken down on his cheeks, like his bright curling hair, shone golden in the sunlight. A divine graciousness transfused the white temples that caught that golden gleam; a matchless nobleness had set its seal in the short chin raised, but not abruptly. The smile that hovered about the coral lips, yet redder as they seemed by force of contrast with the even teeth, was the smile of some sorrowing angel. Lucien's

hands denoted race; they were shapely hands; hands that men obey at a sign, and women love to kiss. Lucien was slender and of middle height. From a glance at his feet, he might have been taken for a girl in disguise, and this so much the more easily from the feminine contour of the hips, a characteristic of keen-witted, not to say astute, men. This is a trait which seldom misleads, and in Lucien it was a true indication of character; for when he analyzed the society of to-day, his restless mind was apt to take its stand on the lower ground of those diplomatists who hold that success justifies the use of any means however base. It is one of the misfortunes attendant upon great intellects that perforce they comprehend all things, both good and evil.

The two young men judged society by the more lofty standard because their social position was at the lowest end of the scale, for unrecognized power is apt to avenge itself for lowly station by viewing the world from a lofty standpoint. Yet it is, nevertheless, true that they grew but the more bitter and hopeless after these swift soaring flights to the upper regions of thought, their world by right. Lucien had read much and compared; David had thought much and deeply. In spite of the young printer's look of robust, country-bred health, his turn of mind was melancholy and somewhat morbid—he lacked confidence in himself; but Lucien, on the other hand, with an enterprising but changeable nature, was gifted with a boldness little to be expected from his feminine, almost effeminate, figure, graceful though it was. Lucien possessed the Gascon temperament to the highest degree—rash, brave, and adventurous, prone to make the most of the bright side, and as little as possible of the dark; his was the nature that sticks at no crime if there is anything to be gained by it, and laughs at the vice which serves as a stepping-stone. Just now these tendencies of ambition were held in check, partly by the fair illusions of youth, partly by the enthusiasm which led him to prefer the nobler methods, which every man in love with glory tries first of all. Lucien was struggling as yet with himself and his own desires, and not with the difficulties of

life; at strife with his own power, and not with the baseness of other men, that fatal exemplar for impressionable minds. The brilliancy of his intellect had a keen attraction for David. David admired his friend, while he kept him out of the scrapes into which he was led by the *furie française.*

David, with his well-balanced mind and timid nature at variance with a strong constitution, was by no means wanting in the persistence of the Northern temper; and if he saw all the difficulties before him, none the less he vowed to himself to conquer, never to give way. In him the unswerving virtue of an apostle was softened by pity that sprang from inexhaustible indulgence. In the friendship grown old already, one was the worshiper, and that one was David; Lucien ruled him like a woman sure of love, and David loved to give way. He felt that his friend's physical beauty implied a real superiority, which he accepted, looking upon himself as one made of coarser and commoner human clay.

"The ox for patient labor in the fields, the free life for the bird," he thought to himself. "I will be the ox, and Lucien shall be the eagle."

So for three years these friends had mingled the destinies bright with such glorious promise. Together they read the great works that appeared above the horizon of literature and science since the Peace—the poems of Schiller, Goethe, and Byron, the prose writings of Scott, Jean-Paul, Berzelius, Davy, Cuvier, Lamartine, and many more. They warmed themselves beside these great hearthfires; they tried their powers in abortive creations, in work laid aside and taken up again with new glow of enthusiasm. Incessantly they worked with the unwearied vitality of youth; comrades in poverty, comrades in the consuming love of art and science, till they forgot the hard life of the present, for their minds were wholly bent on laying the foundations of future fame.

"Lucien," said David, "do you know what I have just received from Paris?" He drew a tiny volume from his pocket. "Listen!"

And David read, as a poet can read, first André de Chénier's

Idyll *Néère,* then *Le Malade,* following on with the Elegy on a Suicide, another elegy in the classic taste, and the two last *Iambes.*

"So that is André de Chénier!" Lucien exclaimed again and again. "It fills one with despair!" he cried for the third time, when David surrendered the book to him, unable to read further for emotion.—"A poet rediscovered by a poet!" said Lucien, reading the signature of the preface.

"After Chénier had written those poems, he thought that he had written nothing worth publishing," added David.

Then Lucien in his turn read aloud the fragment of an epic called *L'Aveugle* and two or three of the Elegies, till, when he came upon the line—

If they know not bliss, is there happiness on earth?

He pressed the book to his lips, and tears came to the eyes of either, for the two friends were lovers and fellow-worshipers.

The vine-stems were changing color with the spring; covering the rifted, battered walls of the old house where squalid cracks were spreading in every direction, with fluted columns and knots and bas-reliefs and uncounted masterpieces of I know not what order of architecture, erected by fairy hands. Fancy had scattered flowers and crimson gems over the gloomy little yard, and Chénier's *Camille* became for David the Eve whom he worshiped, for Lucien a great lady to whom he paid his homage. Poetry had shaken out her starry robe above the workshop where the "monkeys" and "bears" were grotesquely busy among types and presses. Five o'clock struck, but the friends felt neither hunger nor thirst; life had turned to a golden dream, and all the treasures of the world lay at their feet. Far away on the horizon lay the blue streak to which Hope points a finger in storm and stress; and a siren voice sounded in their ears, calling, "Come, spread your wings; through that streak of gold or silver or azure lies the sure way of escape from evil fortune!"

Just at that moment the low glass door of the workshop was opened, and out came Cérizet, an apprentice (David had

brought the urchin from Paris). This youth introduced a stranger, who saluted the friends politely, and spoke to David.

"This, sir, is a monograph which I am desirous of printing," said he, drawing a huge package of manuscript from his pocket. "Will you oblige me with an estimate?"

"We do not undertake work on such a scale, sir," David answered, without looking at the manuscript. "You had better see the Messieurs Cointet about it."

"Still we have a very pretty type which might suit it," put in Lucien, taking up the roll. "We must ask you to be kind enough, sir, to leave your commission with us and call again to-morrow, and we will give you an estimate."

"Have I the pleasure of addressing M. Lucien Chardon?"

"Yes, sir," said the foreman.

"I am fortunate in this opportunity of meeting with a young poet destined to such greatness," returned the author. "Mme. de Bargeton sent me here."

Lucien flushed red at the name, and stammered out something about gratitude for the interest which Mme. de Bargeton took in him. David noticed his friend's embarrassed flush, and left him in conversation with the country gentleman, the author of a monograph on silkworm cultivation, prompted by vanity to print the effort for the benefit of fellow-members of the local agricultural society.

When the author had gone, David spoke.

"Lucien, are you in love with Mme. de Bargeton?"

"Passionately."

"But social prejudices set you as far apart as if she were living at Pekin and you in Greenland."

"The will of two lovers can rise victorious over all things," said Lucien, lowering his eyes.

"You will forget us," returned the alarmed lover, as Eve's fair face rose before his mind.

"On the contrary, I have perhaps sacrificed my love to you," cried Lucien.

"What do you mean?"

"In spite of my love, in spite of the different motives which

bid me obtain a secure footing in her house, I have told her that I will never go thither again unless another is made welcome too, a man whose gifts are greater than mine, a man destined for a brilliant future—David Séchard, my brother, my friend. I shall find an answer waiting when I go home. All the aristocrats may have been asked to hear me read my verses this evening, but I shall not go if the answer is negative, and I will never set foot in Mme. de Bargeton's house again."

David brushed the tears from his eyes, and wrung Lucien's hand. The clock struck six.

"Eve must be anxious; good-bye," Lucien added abruptly.

He hurried away. David stood overcome by the emotion that is only felt to the full at his age, and more especially in such a position as his—the friends were like two young swans with wings unclipped as yet by the experiences of provincial life.

"Heart of gold!" David exclaimed to himself, as his eyes followed Lucien across the workshop.

Lucien went down to L'Houmeau along the broad Promenade de Beaulieu, the Rue du Minage, and Saint-Peter's Gate. It was the longest way round, so you may be sure that Mme. de Bargeton's house lay on the way. So delicious it was to pass under her windows, though she knew nothing of his presence, that for the past two months he had gone round daily by the Palet Gate into L'Houmeau.

Under the trees of Beaulieu he saw how far the suburb lay from the city. The custom of the country, moreover, had raised other barriers harder to surmount than the mere physical difficulty of the steep flights of steps which Lucien was descending. Youth and ambition had thrown the flying-bridge of glory across the gulf between the city and the suburb, yet Lucien was as uneasy in his mind over his lady's answer as any king's favorite who has tried to climb yet higher, and fears that being over-bold he is like to fall. This must seem a dark saying to those who have never studied the manners and customs of cities divided into the upper and lower

town; wherefore it is necessary to enter here upon some topographical details, and this so much the more if the reader is to comprehend the position of one of the principal characters in the story—Mme. de Bargeton.

The old city of Angoulême is perched aloft on a crag like a sugar-loaf, overlooking the plain where the Charente winds away through the meadows. The crag is an outlying spur on the Périgord side of a long, low ridge of hill, which terminates abruptly just above the road from Paris to Bordeaux, so that the Rock of Angoulême is a sort of promontory marking out the line of three picturesque valleys. The ramparts and great gateways and ruined fortress on the summit of the crag still remain to bear witness to the importance of this stronghold during the Religious Wars, when Angoulême was a military position coveted alike of Catholics and Calvinists, but its old-world strength is a source of weakness in modern days; Angoulême could not spread down to the Charente, and shut in between its ramparts and the steep sides of the crag, the old town is condemned to stagnation of the most fatal kind.

The Government made an attempt about this very time to extend the town towards Périgord, building a Prefecture, a Naval School, and barracks along the hillside, and opening up roads. But private enterprise had been beforehand elsewhere. For some time past the suburb of L'Houmeau had sprung up, a mushroom growth at the foot of the crag and along the river-side, where the direct road runs from Paris to Bordeaux. Everybody has heard of the great paper-mills of Angoulême, established perforce three hundred years ago on the Charente and its branch streams, where there was a sufficient fall of water. The largest State factory of marine ordnance in France was established at Ruelle, some six miles away. Carriers, wheelwrights, posthouses, and inns, every agency for public conveyance, every industry that lives by road or river, was crowded together in Lower Angoulême, to avoid the difficulty of the ascent of the hill. Naturally, too, tanneries, laundries, and all such waterside trades stood within reach of the Charente; and along the banks of the river lay the stores of brandy and great warehouses full of the water-

borne raw material; all the carrying trade of the Charente, in short, had lined the quays with buildings.

So the Faubourg of L'Houmeau grew into a busy and prosperous city, a second Angoulême rivalling the upper town, the residence of the powers that be, the lords spiritual and temporal of Angoulême; though L'Houmeau, with all its business and increasing greatness, was still a mere appendage of the city above. The noblesse and officialdom dwelt on the crag, trade and wealth remained below. No love is lost between these two sections of the community all the world over, and in Angoulême it would have been hard to say which of the two camps detested the other the more cordially. Under the Empire the machinery worked fairly smoothly, but the Restoration wrought both sides to the highest pitch of exasperation.

Nearly every house in the upper town of Angoulême is inhabited by noble, or at any rate by old burgher, families, who live independently on their incomes—a sort of autochthonous nation who suffer no aliens to come among them. Possibly, after two hundred years of unbroken residence, and it may be an intermarriage or two with one of the primordial houses, a family from some neighboring district may be adopted, but in the eyes of the aboriginal race they are still newcomers of yesterday.

Prefects, receivers-general, and various administrations that have come and gone during the last forty years, have tried to tame the ancient families perched aloft like wary ravens on their crag; the said families were always willing to accept invitations to dinners and dances; but as to admitting the strangers to their own houses, they were inexorable. Ready to scoff and disparage, jealous and niggardly, marrying only among themselves, the families formed a serried phalanx to keep out intruders. Of modern luxury they had no notion; and as for sending a boy to Paris, it was sending him, they thought, to certain ruin. Such sagacity will give a sufficient idea of the old-world manners and customs of this society, suffering from thick-headed Royalism, infected with bigotry rather than zeal, all stagnating together, motionless as their

town founded upon a rock. Yet Angoulême enjoyed a great reputation in the provinces round about for its educational advantages, and neighboring towns sent their daughters to its boarding schools and convents.

It is easy to imagine the influence of the class sentiment which held Angoulême aloof from L'Houmeau. The merchant classes are rich, the *noblesse* are usually poor. Each side takes its revenge in scorn of the other. The tradespeople in Angoulême espouse the quarrel. "He is a man of L'Houmeau!" a shopkeeper of the upper town will tell you, speaking of a merchant in the lower suburb, throwing an accent into the speech which no words can describe. When the Restoration defined the position of the French *noblesse,* holding out hopes to them which could only be realized by a complete and general topsy-turvydom; the distance between Angoulême and L' Houmeau, already more strongly marked than the distance between the hill and plain, was widened yet further. The better families, all devoted as one man to the Government, grew more exclusive here than in any other part of France. "The man of L'Houmeau" became little better than a pariah. Hence the deep, smothered hatred which broke out everywhere with such ugly unanimity in the insurrection of 1830 and destroyed the elements of a durable social system in France. As the overweening haughtiness of the Court nobles detached the provincial *noblesse* from the throne, so did these last alienate the *bourgeoisie* from the royal cause by behavior that galled their vanity in every possible way.

So "a man of L'Houmeau," a druggist's son, in Mme. de Bargeton's house was nothing less than a little revolution. Who was responsible for it? Lamartine and Victor Hugo, Casimir Delavigne and Canalis, Béranger and Chateaubriand, Villemain and M. Aignan, Soumet and Tissot, Etienne and Davrigny, Benjamin Constant and Lamennais, Cousin and Michaud,—all the old and young illustrious names in literature in short, Liberals and Royalists, alike must divide the blame among them. Mme. de Bargeton loved art and letters, eccentric taste on her part, a craze deeply deplored in An-

goulême. In justice to the lady, it is necessary to give a sketch of the previous history of a woman born to shine, and left by unlucky circumstances in the shade, a woman whose influence decided Lucien's career.

M. de Bargeton was the great-grandson of an alderman of Bordeaux named Mirault, ennobled under Louis XIII. for long tenure of office. His son, bearing the name of Mirault de Bargeton, became an officer in the household troops of Louis XIV., and married so great a fortune that in the reign of Louis XV. his son dropped the Mirault and was called simply M. de Bargeton. This M. de Bargeton, the alderman's grandson, lived up to his quality so strenuously that he ran through the family property and checked the course of its fortunes. Two of his brothers indeed, great-uncles of the present Bargeton, went into business again, for which reason you will find the name of Mirault among Bordeaux merchants at this day. The lands of Bargeton, in Angoumois in the borony of Rochefoucauld, being entailed, and the house in Angoulême, called the Hôtel Bargeton, likewise, the grandson of M. de Bargeton the Waster came in for these hereditaments; though the year 1789 deprived him of all seignorial rights save to the rents paid by his tenants, which amounted to some ten thousand francs per annum. If his grandsire had but walked in the ways of his illustrious progenitors, Bargeton I. and Bargeton II., Bargeton V. (who may be dubbed Bargeton the Mute by way of distinction) should by rights have been born to the title of Marquis of Bargeton; he would have been connected with some great family or other, and in due time he had been a duke and a peer of France, like many another; whereas, in 1805, he thought himself uncommonly lucky when he married Mlle. Marie-Louise-Anaïs de Nègrepelisse, the daughter of a noble long relegated to the obscurity of his monor-house, scion though he was of the younger branch of one of the oldest families in the south of France. There had been a Nègrepelisse among the hostages of St. Louis. The head of the elder branch, however, had borne the illustrious name of d'Espard

since the reign of Henri Quatre, when the Nègrepelisse of that day married an heiress of the d'Espard family. As for M. de Nègrepelisse, the younger son of a younger son, he lived upon his wife's property, a small estate in the neighborhood of Barbezieux, farming the land to admiration, selling his corn in the market himself, and distilling his own brandy, laughing at those who ridiculed him, so long as he could pile up silver crowns, and now and again round out his estate with another bit of land.

Circumstances unusual enough in out-of-the-way places in the country had inspired Mme. de Bargeton with a taste for music and reading. During the Revolution one Abbé Niollant, the Abbé Roze's best pupil, found a hiding-place in the old manor-house of Escarbas, and brought with him his baggage of musical compositions. The old country gentleman's hospitality was handsomely repaid, for the Abbé undertook his daughter's education. Anaïs, or Naïs, as she was called, must otherwise have been left to herself, or, worse still, to some coarse-minded servant-maid. The Abbé was not only a musician, he was well and widely read, and knew both Italian and German; so Mlle. de Nègrepelisse received instruction in those tongues, as well as in counterpoint. He explained the great masterpieces of the French, German, and Italian literatures, and deciphered with her the music of the great composers. Finally, as time hung heavy on his hands in the seclusion enforced by political storms, he taught his pupil Latin and Greek and some smatterings of natural science. A mother might have modified the effects of a man's education upon a young girl, whose independent spirit had been fostered in the first place by a country life. The Abbé Niollant, an enthusiast and a poet, possessed the artistic temperament in a peculiarly high degree, a temperament compatible with many estimable qualities, but prone to raise itself above *bourgeois* prejudices by the liberty of its judgments and breadth of view. In society an intellect of this order wins pardon for its boldness by its depth and originality; but in private life it would seem to do positive mischief, by suggest-

ing wanderings from the beaten track. The Abbé was by no means wanting in goodness of heart, and his ideas were therefore the more contagious for this high-spirited girl, in whom they were confirmed by a lonely life. The Abbé Niollant's pupil learned to be fearless in criticism and ready in judgment; it never occurred to her tutor that qualities so necessary in a man are disadvantages in a woman destined for the homely life of a house-mother. And though the Abbé constantly impressed it upon his pupil that it behoved her to be the more modest and gracious with the extent of her attainments, Mlle. de Nègrepelisse conceived an excellent opinion of herself and a robust contempt for ordinary humanity. All those about her were her inferiors, or persons who hastened to do her bidding, till she grew to be as haughty as a great lady, with none of the charming blandness and urbanity of a great lady. The instincts of vanity were flattered by the pride that the poor Abbé took in his pupil, the pride of an author who sees himself in his work, and for her misfortune she met no one with whom she could measure herself. Isolation is one of the greatest drawbacks of a country life. We lose the habit of putting ourselves to any inconvenience for the sake of others when there is no one for whom to make the trifling sacrifices of personal effort required by dress and manner. And everything in us shares in the change for the worse; the form and the spirit deteriorate together.

With no social intercourse to compel self-repression, Mlle. de Nègrepelisse's bold ideas passed into her manner and the expression of her face. There was a cavalier air about her, a something that seems at first original, but only suited to women of adventurous life. So this education, and the consequent asperities of character, which would have been softened down in a higher social sphere, could only serve to make her ridiculous at Angoulême so soon as her adorers should cease to worship eccentricities that charm only in youth.

As for M. de Nègrepelisse, he would have given all his daughter's books to save the life of a sick bullock; and so miserly was he, that he would not have given her two fathings

over and above the allowance to which she had a right, even if it had been a question of some indispensable trifle for her education.

In 1802 the Abbé died, before the marriage of his dear child, a marriage which he, doubtless, would never have advised. The old father found his daughter a great care now that the Abbé was gone. The high-spirited girl, with nothing else to do, was sure to break into rebellion against his niggardliness, and he felt quite unequal to the struggle. Like all young women who leave the appointed track of woman's life, Naïs had her own opinions about marriage, and had no great inclination thereto. She shrank from submitting herself, body and soul, to the feeble, undignified specimens of mankind whom she had chanced to meet. She wished to rule, marriage meant obedience; and between obedience to coarse caprices and a mind without indulgence for her tastes, and flight with a lover who should please her, she would not have hesitated for a moment.

M. de Nègrepelisse maintained sufficient of the tradition of birth to dread a *mésalliance*. Like many another parent, he resolved to marry his daughter, not so much on her account as for his own peace of mind. A noble or a country gentleman was the man for him, somebody not too clever, incapable of haggling over the account of the trust; stupid enough and easy enough to allow Naïs to have her own way, and disinterested enough to take her without a dowry. But where to look for a son-in-law to suit father and daughter equally well, was the problem. Such a man would be the phœnix of sons-in-law.

To M. de Nègregelisse pondering over the eligible bachelors of the province with these double requirements in his mind, M. de Bargeton seemed to be the only one who answered to this description. M. de Bargeton, aged forty, considerably shattered by the amorous dissipations of his youth, was generally held to be a man of remarkably feeble intellect; but he had just the exact amount of commonsense required for the management of his fortune, and breeding sufficient to enable

him to avoid blunders or blatant follies in society in Angoulême. In the bluntest manner M. de Nègrepelisse pointed out the negative virtues of the model husband designed for his daughter, and made her see the way to manage him so as to secure her own happiness. So Naïs married the bearer of arms, two hundred years old already, for the Bargeton arms are blazoned thus: *the first or, three attires gules; the second, three ox's heads cabossed, two and one, sable; the third, barry of six, azure and argent, in the first, six sheels or, three, two, and one.* Provided with a chaperon, Naïs could steer her fortunes as she chose under the style of the firm, and with the help of such connections as her wit and beauty would obtain for her in Paris. Naïs was enchanted by the prospect of such liberty. M. de Bargeton was of the opinion that he was making a brilliant marriage, for he expected that in no long while M. de Nègrepelisse would leave him the estates which he was rounding out so lovingly; but to an unprejudiced spectator it certainly seemed as though the duty of writing the bridegroom's epitaph might devolve upon his father-in-law.

By this time Mme. de Bargeton was thirty-six years old and her husband fifty-eight. The disparity in age was the more startling since M. de Bargeton looked like a man of seventy, whereas his wife looked scarcely half her age. She could still wear rose-color, and her hair hanging loose upon her shoulders. Although their income did not exceed twelve thousand francs, they ranked among the half-dozen largest fortunes in the old city, merchants and officials excepted; for M. and Mme. de Bargeton were obliged to live in Angoulême until such time as Mme. de Bargeton's inheritance should fall in and they could go to Paris. Meanwhile they were bound to be attentive to old M. de Nègrepelisse (who kept them waiting so long that his son-in-law in fact predeceased him), and Naïs' brilliant intellectual gifts, and the wealth that lay like undiscovered ore in her nature, profited her nothing, underwent the transforming operation of Time, and changed to absurdities. For our absurdities spring, in fact, for the most part, from the good in us, from some faculty or quality abnor-

mally developed. Pride, untempered by intercourse with the great world, becomes stiff and starched by contact with petty things; in a loftier moral atmosphere it would have grown to noble magnanimity. Enthusiasm, that virtue within a virtue, forming the saint, inspiring the devotion hidden from all eyes and glowing out upon the world in verse, turns to exaggeration, with the trifles of a narrow existence for its object. Far away from the centres of light shed by great minds, where the air is quick with thought, knowledge stands still, taste is corrupted like stagnant water, and passion dwindles, frittered away upon the infinitely small objects which it strives to exalt. Herein lies the secret of the avarice and tittle-tattle that poison provincial life. The contagion of narrow-mindedness and meanness affects the noblest natures; and in such ways as these, men born to be great, and women who would have been charming if they had fallen under the forming influence of greater minds, are balked of their lives.

Here was Mme. de Bargeton, for instance, smiting the lyre for every trifle, and publishing her emotions indiscriminately to her circle. As a matter of fact, when sensations appeal to an audience of one, it is better to keep them to ourselves. A sunset certainly is a glorious poem; but if a woman describes it, in high-sounding words, for the benefit of matter-of-fact people, is she not ridiculous? There are pleasures which can only be felt to the full when two souls meet, poet and poet, heart and heart. She had a trick of using high-sounding phrases, interlarded with exaggerated expressions, the kind of stuff ingeniously nicknamed *tartines* by the French journalist, who furnishes a daily supply of the commodity for a public that daily performs the difficult feat of swallowing it. She squandered superlatives recklessly in her talk, and the smallest things took giant proportions. It was at this period of her career that she began to type-ize, individualize, synthesize, dramatize, superiorize, analyze, poetize, angelize, neologize, tragedify, prosify, and colossify—you must violate the laws of language to find words to express the new-fangled whimsies in which even women here and there indulge. The heat of

her language communicated itself to the brain, and the dithyrambs on her lips were spoken out of the abundance of her heart. She palpitated, swooned, and went into ecstasies over anything and everything, over the devotion of a Sister of Charity, and the execution of the brothers Fauchet, over M. d'Arlincourt's *Ipsiboé,* Lewis' *Anaconda,* or the escape of La Valette, or the presence of mind of a lady friend who put burglars to flight by imitating a man's voice. Everything was heroic, extraordinary, strange, wonderful, and divine. She would work herself into a state of excitement, indignation, or depression; she soared to heaven, and sank again, gazed at the sky, or looked to earth; her eyes were always filled with tears. She wore herself out with chronic admiration, and wasted her strength on curious dislikes. Her mind ran on the Pasha of Janina; she would have liked to try conclusions with him in his seraglio, and had a great notion of being sewn in a sack and thrown into the water. She envied that blue-stocking of the desert, Lady Hester Stanhope; she longed to be a sister of Saint Camilla and tend the sick and die of yellow fever in a hospital at Barcelona; 'twas a high, a noble destiny! In short, she thirsted for any draught but the clear spring water of her own life, flowing hidden among green pastures. She adored Byron and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, or anybody else with a picturesque or dramatic career. Her tears were ready to flow for every misfortune; she sang pæans for every victory. She sympathized with the fallen Napoleon, and with Mehemet Ali, massacring the foreign usurpers of Egypt. In short, any kind of genius was accommodated with an aureole, and she was fully persuaded that gifted immortals lived on incense and light.

A good many people looked upon her as a harmless lunatic, but in these extravagances of hers a keener observer surely would have seen the broken fragments of a magnificent edifice that had crumbled into ruin before it was completed, the stones of a heavenly Jerusalem—love, in short, without a lover. And this was indeed the fact.

The story of the first eighteen years of Mme. de Bargeton's

married life can be summed up in a few words. For a long while she lived upon herself and distant hopes. Then, when she began to see that their narrow income put the longed-for life in Paris quite out of the question, she looked about her at the people with whom her life must be spent, and shuddered at her loneliness. There was not a single man who could inspire the madness to which women are prone when they despair of a life become stale and unprofitable in the present, and with no outlook for the future. She had nothing to look for, nothing to expect from chance, for there are lives in which chance plays no part. But when the Empire was in the full noonday of glory, and Napoleon was sending the flower of his troops to the Peninsula, her disappointed hopes revived. Natural curiosity prompted her to make an effort to see the heroes who were conquering Europe in obedience to a word from the Emperor in the order of the day; the heroes of a modern time who outdid the mythical feats of paladins of old. The cities of France, however avaricious or refractory, must perforce do honor to the Imperial Guard, and mayors and prefects went out to meet them with set speeches as if the conquerors had been crowned kings. Mme. de Bargeton went to a *ridotto* given to the town by a regiment, and fell in love with an officer of a good family, a sub-lieutenant, to whom the crafty Napoleon had given a glimpse of the bâton of a Marshal of France. Love, restrained, greater and nobler than the ties that were made and unmade so easily in those days, was consecrated coldly by the hands of death. On the battlefield of Wagram a shell shattered the only record of Mme. de Bargeton's young beauty, a portrait worn on the heart of the Marquis of Cante-Croix. For long afterwards she wept for the young soldier, the colonel in his second campaign, for the heart hot with love and glory that set a letter from Naïs above Imperial favor. The pain of those days cast a veil of sadness over her face, a shadow that only vanished at the terrible age when a woman first discovers with dismay that the best years of her life are over, and she has had no joy of them; when she sees her roses whither, and the longing

for love is revived again with the desire to linger yet for a little on the last smiles of youth. Her nobler qualities dealt so many wounds to her soul at the moment when the cold of the provinces seized upon her. She would have died of grief like the ermine if by chance she had been sullied by contact with those men whose thoughts are bent on winning a few sous nightly at cards after a good dinner; pride saved her from the shabby love intrigues of the provinces. A woman so much above the level of those about her, forced to decide between the emptiness of the men whom she meets and the emptiness of her own life, can make but the one choice; marriage and society became a cloister for Anaïs. She lived by poetry as the Carmelite lives by religion. All the famous foreign books published in France for the first time between 1815 and 1821, the great essayists, M. de Bonald and M. de Maistre (those two eagles of thought)—all the lighter French literature, in short, that appeared during that sudden outburst of first vigorous growth might bring delight into her solitary life, but not flexibility of mind or body. She stood strong and straight like some forest tree, lightning-blasted but still erect. Her dignity became a stilted manner, her social supremacy led her into affectation and sentimental over-refinements; she queened it with her foibles, after the usual fashion of those who allow their courtiers to adore them.

This was Mme. de Bargeton's past life, a dreary chronicle which must be given if Lucien's position with regard to the lady is to be comprehensible. Lucien's introduction came about oddly enough. In the previous winter a newcomer had brought some interest into Mme. de Bargeton's monotonous life. The place of controller of excise fell vacant, and M. de Barante appointed a man whose adventurous life was a sufficient passport to the house of the sovereign lady who had her share of feminine curiosity.

M. du Châtelet—he began life as plain Sixte Châtelet, but since 1806 had the wit to adopt the particle—M. du Châtelet was one of the agreeable young men who escaped conscription after conscription by keeping very close to the Imperial sun.

He had begun his career as private secretary to an Imperial Highness, a post for which he possessed every qualification. Personable and of a good figure, a clever billiard-player, a passable amateur actor, he danced well, and excelled in most physical exercises; he could, moreover, sing a ballad and applaud a witticism. Supple, envious, never at a loss, there was nothing that he did not know—nothing that he really knew. He knew nothing, for instance, of music, but he could sit down to the piano and accompany, after a fashion, a woman who consented after much pressing to sing a ballad learned by heart in a month of hard practice. Incapable though he was of any feeling for poetry, he would boldly ask permission to retire for ten minutes to compose an impromptu, and return with a quatrain, flat as a pancake, wherein rhyme did duty for reason. M. du Châtelet had besides a very pretty talent for filling in the ground of the Princess' worsted work after the flowers had been begun; he held her skeins of silk with infinite grace, entertained her with dubious nothings more or less transparently veiled. He was ignorant of painting, but he could copy a landscape, sketch a head in profile, or design a costume and color it. He had, in short, all the little talents that a man could turn to such useful account in times when women exercised more influence in public life than most people imagine. Diplomacy he claimed to be his strong point; it usually is with those who have no knowledge, and are profound by reason of their emptiness; and, indeed, this kind of skill possesses one signal advantage, for it can only be displayed in the conduct of the affairs of the great, and when discretion is the quality required, a man who knows nothing can safely say nothing, and take refuge in a mysterious shake of the head; in fact, the cleverest practitioner is he who can swim with the current and keep his head well above the stream of events which he appears to control, a man's fitness for this business varying inversely as his specific gravity. But in this particular art or craft, as in all others, you shall find a thousand mediocrities for one man of genius; and in spite of Châtelet's services, ordinary and ex-

traordinary, Her Imperial Highness could not procure a seat in the Privy Council for her private secretary; not that he would not have made a delightful Master of Requests, like many another, but the Princess was of the opinion that her secretary was better placed with her than anywhere else in the world. He was made a Baron, however, and went to Cassel as envoy-extraordinary, no empty form of words, for he cut a very extraordinary figure there—Napoleon used him as a diplomatic courier in the thick of a European crisis. Just as he had been promised the post of minister to Jerome in Westphalia, the Empire fell to pieces; and balked of his *ambassade de famille* as he called it, he went off in despair to Egypt with General de Montriveau. A strange chapter of accidents separated him from his traveling companion, and for two long years Sixte du Châtelet led a wandering life among the Arab tribes of the desert, who sold and resold their captive—his talents being not of the slightest use to the nomad tribes. At length, about the time that Montriveau reached Tangier, Châtelet found himself in the territory of the Imam of Muscat, had the luck to find an English vessel just about to set sail, and so came back to Paris a year sooner than his sometime companion. Once in Paris, his recent misfortunes, and certain connections of long standing, together with services rendered to great persons now in power, recommended him to the President of the Council, who put him in M. de Barante's department until such time as a controllership should fall vacant. So the part that M. du Châtelet once had played in the history of an Imperial Princess, his reputation for success with women, the strange story of his travels and sufferings, all awakened the interest of the ladies of Angoulême.

M. le Baron Sixte du Châtelet informed himself as to the manners and customs of the upper town, and took his cue accordingly. He appeared on the scene as a jaded man of the world, broken in health, and weary in spirit. He would raise his hand to his forehead at all seasons, as if pain never gave him a moment's respite, a habit that recalled his travels and

made him interesting. He was on visiting terms with the authorities—the general in command, the prefect, the receiver-general, and the bishop; but in every house he was frigid, polite, and slightly supercilious, like a man out of his proper place awaiting the favors of power. His social talents he left to conjecture, nor did they lose anything in reputation on that account; then when people began to talk about him and wish to know him, and curiosity was still lively; when he had reconnoitred the men and found them nought, and studied the women with the eyes of experience in the cathedral for several Sundays, he saw that Mme. de Bargeton was the person with whom it would be best to be on intimate terms. Music, he thought, should open the doors of a house where strangers were never received. Surreptitiously he procured one of Miroir's Masses, learned it upon the piano; and one fine Sunday when all Angoulême went to the cathedral, he played the organ, sent those who knew no better into ecstasies over the performance, and stimulated the interest felt in him by allowing his name to slip out through the attendants. As he came out after mass, Mme. de Bargeton complimented him, regretting that she had no opportunity of playing duets with such a musician; and naturally, during an interview of her own seeking, he received the passport, which he could not have obtained if he had asked for it.

So the adroit Baron was admitted to the circle of the queen of Angoulême, and paid her marked attention. The elderly beau—he was forty-five years old—saw that all her youth lay dormant and ready to revive, saw treasures to be turned to account, and possibly a rich widow to wed, to say nothing of expectations; it would be a marriage into the family of Nègrepelisse, and for him this meant a family connection with the Marquise d'Espard, and a political career in Paris. Here was a fair tree to cultivate in spite of the ill-omened, unsightly mistletoe that grew thick upon it; he would hang his fortunes upon it, and prune it, and wait till he could gather its golden fruit.

High-born Angoulême shrieked against the introduction

of a Giaour into the sanctuary, for Mme. de Bargeton's salon was a kind of holy of holies in a society that kept itself unspotted from the world. The only outsider intimate there was the bishop; the prefect was admitted twice or thice in a year, the receiver-general was never received at all; Mme. de Bargeton would go to concerts and "at homes" at his house, but she never accepted invitations to dinner. And now, she who had declined to open her doors to the receiver-general, welcomed a mere controller of excise! Here was a novel order of precedence for snubbed authority; such a thing it had never entered their minds to conceive.

Those who by dint of mental effort can understand a kind of pettiness which, for that matter, can be found on any and every social level, will realize the awe with which the *bourgeoisie* of Angoulême regarded the Hôtel de Bargeton. The inhabitant of L'Houmeau beheld the grandeur of that miniature Louvre, the glory of the Angoumoisin Hôtel de Rambouillet, shining at a solar distance; and yet, within it there was gathered together all the direst intellectual poverty, all the decayed gentility from twenty leagues round about.

Political opinion expanded itself in wordy commonplaces vociferated with emphasis; the *Quotidienne* was comparatively Laodicean in its loyalty, and Louis XVIII. a Jacobin. The women, for the most part, were awkward, silly, insipid, and ill dressed; there was always something amiss that spoiled the whole; nothing in them was complete, toilette or talk, flesh or spirit. But for his designs on Mme. de Bargeton, Châtelet could not have endured the society. And yet the manners and spirit of caste, the something that tells of birth, the proud spirit of the noble in his ruined manor-house, the knowledge of the traditions of good breeding,—these things covered a multitude of deficiencies. Nobility of feeling was far more real here than in the lofty world of Paris. You might compare these country Royalists, if the metaphor may be allowed, to old-fashioned silver plate, antiquated and tarnished, but weighty; their attachment to the House of Bourbon as the House of Bourbon did them honor. The very fixity

of their political opinions was a sort of faithfulness. The distance that they set between themselves and the *bourgeoisie,* their very exclusiveness, gave them a certain elevation, and enhanced their value. Each noble represented a certain price for the townsmen, as Bambara negroes, we are told, attach a money value to cowrie shells.

Some of the women, flattered by M. du Châtelet, discerned in him the superior qualities lacking in the men of their own sect, and the insurrection of self-love was pacified. These ladies all hoped to succeed to the Imperial Highness. Purists were of the opinion that you might see the intruder in Mme. de Bargeton's house, but not elsewhere. Du Châtelet was fain to put up with a good deal of insolence, but he held his ground by cultivating the clergy. He encouraged the queen of Angoulême in foibles bred of the soil; he brought her all the newest books; he read aloud the poetry that appeared. Together they went into ecstasies over these poets; she in all sincerity, he with suppressed yawns; but he bore with the Romantics with a patience hardly to be expected of a man of the Imperial school, who scarcely could make out what the young writers meant. Not so Mme. de Bargeton; she waxed enthusiastic over the Renaissance, due to the return of the Bourbon Lilies; she loved M. de Chateaubriand for calling Victor Hugo "a sublime child." It depressed her that she could only know genius from afar, she sighed for Paris, where great men live. For these reasons M. du Châtelet thought he had done a wonderfully clever thing when he told the lady that there at that moment in Angoulême there was "another sublime child," a young poet, a rising star whose glory surpassed the whole Parisian galaxy, though he knew it not. A great man of the future had been born in L'Houmeau! The headmaster of the school had shown the Baron some admirable verses. The poor and humble lad was a second Chatterton, with none of the political baseness and ferocious hatred of the great ones of earth that led his English prototype to turn pamphleteer and revile his benefactors. Mme. de Bargeton in her little circle of five or six persons, who were sup-

posed to share her tastes for art and letters, because this one scraped a fiddle, and that splashed sheets of white paper, more or less, with sepia, and the other was president of a local agricultural society, or was gifted with a bass voice that rendered *Se fiato in corpo* like a war whoop—Mme. de Bargeton amid these grotesque figures was like a famished actor set down to a stage dinner of pasteboard. No words, therefore, can describe her joy at these tidings. She must see this poet, this angel! She raved about him, went into raptures, talked of him for whole hours together. Before two days were out the sometime diplomatic courier had negotiated (through the headmaster) for Lucien's appearance in the Hôtel de Bargeton.

Poor helots of the provinces, for whom the distances between class and class are so far greater than for the Parisian (for whom, indeed, these distances visibly lessen day by day); souls so grievously oppressed by the social barriers behind which all sorts and conditions of men sit crying *Raca!* with mutual anathemas—you, and you alone, will fully comprehend the ferment in Lucien's heart and brain, when his awe-inspiring headmaster told him that the great gates of the Hôtel de Bargeton would shortly open and turn upon their hinges at his fame! Lucien and David, walking together of an evening in the Promenade de Beaulieu, had looked up at the house with the old-fashioned gables, and wondered whether their names would ever so much as reach ears inexorably deaf to knowledge that came from a lowly origin; and now he (Lucien) was to be made welcome there!

No one except his sister was in the secret. Eve, like the thrifty housekeeper and divine magician that she was, conjured up a few louis d'or from her savings to buy thin shoes for Lucien of the best shoemaker in Angoulême, and an entirely new suit of clothes from the most renowned tailor. She made a frill for his best shirt, and washed and pleated it with her own hands. And how pleased she was to see him so dressed! How proud she felt of her brother, and what quantities of advice she gave him! Her intuition foresaw count-

less foolish fears. Lucien had a habit of resting his elbows on the table when he was in deep thought; he would even go so far as to draw a table nearer to lean upon it; Eve told him that he must forget himself so far in those aristocratic precincts.

She went with him as far as St. Peter's Gate, and when they were almost opposite the cathedral she stopped, and watched him pass down the Rue de Beaulieu to the Promenade, where M. du Châtelet was waiting for him. And after he was out of sight, she still stood there, poor girl! in a great tremor of emotion, as though some great thing had happened to them. Lucien in Mme. de Bargeton's house!—for Eve it meant the dawn of success. The innocent creature did not suspect that where ambition begins, ingenuous feeling ends.

Externals in the Rue du Minage gave Lucien no sense of surprise. This palace, that loomed so large in his imagination, was a house built of the soft stone of the country, mellowed by time. It looked dismal enough from the street, and inside it was extremely plain; there was the usual provincial courtyard—chilly, prim, and neat; and the house itself was sober, almost convent-like, but in good repair.

Lucien went up the old staircase with the balustrade of chestnut wood (the stone steps ceased after the second floor), crossed a shabby antechamber, and came into the presence in a little wainscoted drawing-room, beyond a dimly-lit salon. The carved woodwork, in the taste of the eighteenth century, had been painted gray. There were monochrome paintings on the frieze panels, and the walls were adorned with crimson damask with a meagre border. The old-fashioned furniture shrank piteously from sight under covers of a red-and-white check pattern. On the sofa, covered with thin mattressed cushions, sat Mme. de Bargeton; the poet beheld her by the light of two wax candles on a sconce with a screen fitted to it, that stood before her on a round table with a green cloth.

The queen did not attempt to rise, but she twisted very gracefully on her seat, smiling on the poet, who was not a little fluttered by the serpentine quiverings; her manner was

distinguished, he thought. For Mme. de Bargeton, she was impressed with Lucien's extreme beauty, with his diffidence, with everything about him; for her the poet already was poetry incarnate. Lucien scrutinized his hostess with discreet side glances; she disappointed none of his expectations of a great lady.

Mme. de Bargeton, following a new fashion, wore a coif of slashed, black velvet, a head-dress that recalls memories of mediæval legend to a young imagination, to amplify, as it were, the dignity of womanhood. Her red-gold hair, escaping from under her cap, hung loose; bright golden color in the light, red in the rounded shadow of the curls that only partially hid her neck. Beneath a massive white brow, clean cut and strongly outlined, shone a pair of bright gray eyes encircled by a margin of mother-of-pearl, two blue veins on each side of the nose bringing out the whiteness of that delicate setting. The Bourbon curve of the nose added to the ardent expression of an oval face; it was as if the royal temper of the House of Condé shone conspicuous in this feature. The careless cross-folds of the bodice left a white throat bare, and half revealed the outlines of a still youthful figure and shapely, well placed contours beneath.

With fingers tapering and well-kept, though somewhat too thin, Mme. de Bargeton amiably pointed to a seat by her side, M. du Châtelet ensconced himself in an easy-chair, and Lucien then became aware that there was no one else in the room.

Mme. de Bargeton's words intoxicated the young poet from L'Houmeau. For Lucien those three hours spent in her presence went by like a dream that we would fain have last forever. She was not thin, he thought; she was slender: in love with love, and loverless; and delicate in spite of her strength. Her foibles, exaggerated by her manner, took his fancy; for youth sets out with a love of hyperbole, that infirmity of noble souls. He did not so much as see that her cheeks were faded, that the patches of color on the cheek-bone were faded and hardened to a brick-red by listless days and a certain amount of ailing health. His imagination fastened

at once on the glowing eyes, on the dainty curls rippling with light, on the dazzling fairness of her skin, and hovered about those bright points as the moth hovers about the candle flame. For her spirit made such appeal to his that he could no longer see the woman as she was. Her feminine exaltation had carried him away, the energy of her expressions, a little staled in truth by pretty hard and constant wear, but new to Lucien, fascinated him so much the more easily because he was determined to be pleased. He had brought none of his own verses to read, but nothing was said of them; he had purposely left them behind because he meant to return; and Mme. de Bargeton did not ask for them, because she meant that he should come back some future day to read them to her. Was not this a beginning of an understanding?

As for M. Sixte du Châtelet, he was not over well pleased with all this. He perceived rather too late in the day that he had a rival in this handsome young fellow. He went with him as far as the first flight of steps below Beaulieu to try the effect of a little diplomacy; and Lucien was not a little astonished when he heard the controller of excise pluming himself on having effected the introduction, and proceeding in this character to give him (Lucien) the benefit of his advice.

"Heaven send that Lucien might meet with better treatment than he had done," such was the matter of M. du Châtelet's discourse. "The Court was less insolent than this pack of dolts in Angoulême. You were expected to endure deadly insults; the superciliousness you had to put up with was something abominable. If this kind of folk did not alter their behavior, there would be another Revolution of '89. As for himself, if he continued to go to the house, it was because he found Mme. de Bargeton to his taste; she was the only woman worth troubling about in Angoulême; he had been paying court to her for want of anything better to do, and now he was desperately in love with her. She would be his before very long, she loved him, everything pointed that way. The conquest of this haughty queen of the society would be his one revenge on the whole household of booby clodpates."

Châtelet talked of his passion in the tone of a man who would have a rival's life if he crossed his path. The elderly butterfly of the Empire came down with his whole weight on the poor poet, and tried to frighten and crush him by his self-importance. He grew the taller as he gave an embellished account of his perilous wanderings; but while he impressed the poet's imagination, the lover was by no means afraid of him.

In spite of the elderly coxcomb, and regardless of his threats and airs of a *bourgeois* bravo, Lucien went back again and again to the house—not too often at first, as became a man of L'Houmeau; but before very long he grew accustomed to the vast condescension, as it had seemed to him at the outset, and came more and more frequently. The druggist's son was a completely insignificant being. If any of the *noblesse* men or women, calling upon Naïs, found Lucien in the room, they met him with the overwhelming graciousness that well-bred people use towards their inferiors. Lucien thought them very kind for a time, and later found out the real reason for their specious amiability. It was not long before he detected a patronizing tone that stirred his gall and confirmed him in his bitter Republicanism, a phase of opinion through which many a would-be patrician passes by way of prelude to his introduction to polite society.

But was there anything that he would not have endured for Naïs?—for so he heard her named by the clan. Like Spanish grandees and the old Austrian nobility at Vienna, these folk, men and women alike, called each other by their Christian names, a final shade of distinction in the inmost ring of Angoumoisin aristocracy.

Lucien loved Naïs as a young man loves the first woman who flatters him, for Naïs prophesied great things and boundless fame for Lucien. She used all her skill to secure her hold upon her poet; not merely did she exalt him beyond measure, but she represented him to himself as a child without fortune whom she meant to start in life; she treated him like a child, to keep him near her; she made him her reader, her

secretary, and cared more for him than she would have thought possible after the dreadful calamity that had befallen her.

She was very cruel to herself in those days, telling herself that it would be folly to love a young man of twenty, so far apart from her socially in the first place; and her behavior to him was a bewildering mixture of familiarity and capricious fits of pride arising from her fears and scruples. She was sometimes a lofty patroness, sometimes she was tender and flattered him. At first, while he was overawed by her rank, Lucien experienced the extremes of dread, hope, and despair, the torture of a first love, that is beaten deep into the heart with the hammer strokes of alternate bliss and anguish. For two months Mme. de Bargeton was for him a benefactress who would take a mother's interest in him; but confidences came next. Mme. de Bargeton began to address her poet as "dear Lucien," and then as "dear," without more ado. The poet grew bolder, and addressed the great lady as Naïs, and there followed the flash of the anger that captivates a boy; she reproached him for calling her by a name in everybody's mouth. The haughty and high-born Nègrepelisse offered the fair angel youth that one of her appellations which was unsoiled by use; for him she would be "Louise." Lucien was in the third heaven.

One evening when Lucien came in, he found Mme. de Bargeton looking at a portrait, which she promptly put away. He wished to see it, and to quiet the despair of a first fit of jealousy Louise showed him Cante-Croix's picture, and told with tears the piteous story of a love so stainless, so cruelly cut short. Was she experimenting with herself? Was she trying a first unfaithfulness to the memory of the dead? Or had she taken it into her head to raise up a rival to Lucien in the portrait? Lucien was too much of a boy to analyze his lady-love; he gave way to unfeigned despair when she opened the campaign by entrenching herself behind the more or less skilfully devised scruples which women raise to have them battered down. When a woman begins to talk about her duty,

regard for appearances or religion, the objections she raises are so many redoubts which she loves to have carried by storm. But on the guileless Lucien these coquetries were thrown away; he would have advanced of his own accord.

"*I* shall not die for you, I will live for you," he cried audaciously one evening; he meant to have no more of M. de Cante-Croix, and gave Louise a glance which told plainly that a crisis was at hand.

Startled at the progress of his new love in herself and her poet, Louise demanded some verses promised for the first page of her album, looking for a pretext for a quarrel in his tardiness. But what became of her when she read the following stanzas, which, naturally, she considered finer than the finest work of Canalis, the poet of the aristocracy?—

The magic brush, light lying flights of song—
To these, but not to these alone, belong
My pages fair;
Often to me, my mistress' pencil steals
To tell the secret gladness that she feels,
The hidden care.

And when her fingers, slowlier at the last,
Of a rich Future, now become the Past,
Seek count of me,
Oh Love, when swift, thick-coming memories rise,
I pray of Thee,
May they bring visions fair as cloudless skies
Of happy voyage o'er a summer sea!

"Was it really I who inspired those lines?" she asked.

The doubt suggested by coquetry to a woman who amused herself by playing with fire brought tears to Lucien's eyes; but her first kiss upon his forehead calmed the storm. Decidedly Lucien was a great man, and she meant to form him; she thought of teaching him Italian and German and perfecting his manners. That would be pretext sufficient for having him constantly with her under the very eyes of her tiresome

courtiers. What an interest in her life! She took up music again for her poet's sake, and revealed the world of sound to him, playing grand fragments of Beethoven till she sent him into ecstasy; and, happy in his delight, turned to the half-swooning poet.

"Is not such happiness as this enough?" she asked hypocritically; and poor Lucien was stupid enough to answer, "Yes."

In the previous week things had reached such a point, that Louise had judged it expedient to ask Lucien to dine with M. de Bargeton as a third. But in spite of this precaution, the whole town knew the state of affairs; and so extraordinary did it appear, that no one would believe the truth. The outcry was terrific. Some were of the opinion that society was on the eve of cataclysm. "See what comes of Liberal doctrines!" cried others.

Then it was that the jealous du Châtelet discovered that Madame Charlotte, the monthly nurse, was no other than Mme. Chardon, "the mother of the Chateaubriand of L'Houmeau," as he put it. The remark passed muster as a joke. Mme. de Chandour was the first to hurry to Mme. de Bargeton.

"Naïs, dear," she said, "do you know what everybody is talking about in Angoulême? This little rhymster's mother is the Madame Charlotte who nursed my sister-in-law through her confinement two months ago."

"What is there extraordinary in that, my dear?" asked Mme. de Bargeton with her most regal air. "She is a druggist's widow, is she not? A poor fate for a Rubempré. Suppose that you and I had not a penny in the world, what should we either of us do for a living? How would you support your children?"

Mme. de Bargeton's presence of mind put an end to the jeremiads of the *noblesse*. Great natures are prone to make a virtue of misfortune; and there is something irresistibly attractive about well-doing when persisted in through evil report; innocence has the piquancy of the forbidden.

Mme. de Bargeton's rooms were crowded that evening with friends who came to remonstrate with her. She brought her most caustic wit into play. She said that as noble families could not produce a Molière, a Racine, a Rousseau, a Voltaire, a Massillon, a Beaumarchais, or a Diderot, people must make up their minds to it, and accept the fact that great men had upholsterers and clockmakers and cutlers for their fathers. She said that genius was always noble. She railed at boorish squires for understanding their real interests so imperfectly. In short, she talked a good deal of nonsense, which would have let the light into heads less dense, but left her audience agape at her eccentricity. And in these ways she conjured away the storm with her heavy artillery.

When Lucien, obedient to her request, appeared for the first time in the faded great drawing-room, where the whist-tables were set out, she welcomed him graciously, and brought him forward, like a queen who means to be obeyed. She addressed the controller of excise as "M. Châtelet," and left that gentleman thunderstruck by the discovery that she knew about the illegal superfetation of the particle. Lucien was forced upon her circle, and was received as a poisonous element, which every person in it vowed to expel with the antidote of insolence.

Naïs had won a victory, but she had lost her supremacy of empire. There was a rumor of insurrection. Amélie, otherwise Mme. de Chandour, hearkening to "M. Châtelet's" counsels, determined to erect a rival altar by receiving on Wednesdays. Now Mme. de Bargeton's salon was open every evening; and those who frequented it were so wedded to their ways, so accustomed to meet about the same tables, to play the familiar game of backgammon, to see the same faces and the same candle sconces night after night; and afterwards to cloak and shawl, and put on overshoes and hats in the old corridor, that they were quite as much attached to the steps of the staircase as to the mistress of the house.

"All resigned themselves to endure the songster" (*chardonneret*) "of the sacred grove," said Alexandre de Brébian,

which was witticism number two. Finally, the president of the agricultural society put an end to the sedition by remarking judicially that "before the Revolution the greatest nobles admitted men like Duclos and Grimm and Crébillon into their society—men who were nobodies, like this little poet of L'Houmeau; but one thing they never did, they never received tax-collectors, and, after all, Châtelet is only a tax-collector."

Du Châtelet suffered for Chardon. Every one turned the cold shoulder upon him; and Châtelet was conscious that he was attacked. When Mme. de Bargeton called him "M. Châtelet," he swore to himself that he would possess her; and now he entered into the views of the mistress of the house, came to the support of the young poet, and declared himself Lucien's friend. The great diplomatist, overlooked by the shortsighted Emperor, made much of Lucien, and declared himself his friend! To launch the poet into society, he gave a dinner, and asked all the authorities to meet him—the prefect, the receiver-general, the colonel in command of the garrison, the head of the Naval School, the president of the Court, and so forth. The poet, poor fellow, was fêted so magnificently, and so belauded, that anybody but a young man of two-and-twenty would have shrewdly suspected a hoax. After dinner, Châtelet drew his rival on to recite *The Dying Sardanapalus* the masterpiece of the hour; and the headmaster of the school, a man of a phlegmatic temperament, applauded with both hands, and vowed that Jean-Baptiste Rousseau had done nothing finer. Sixte, Baron du Châtelet, thought in his heart that this slip of a rhymster would wither incontinently in a hothouse of adulation; perhaps he hoped that when the poet's head was turned with brilliant dreams, he would indulge in some impertinence that would promptly consign him to the obscurity from which he had emerged. Pending the decease of genius, Châtelet appeared to offer up his hopes as a sacrifice at Mme. de Bargeton's feet; but with the ingenuity of a rake, he kept his own plan in abeyance, watching the lovers' movements with keenly

critical eyes, and waiting for the opportunity of ruining Lucien.

From this time forward, vague rumors reported the existence of a great man in Angoumois. Mme. de Bargeton was praised on all sides for the interest which she took in this young eagle. No sooner was her conduct approved than she tried to win a general sanction. She announced a soirée, with ices, tea, and cakes, a great innovation in a city where tea, as yet, was sold only by druggists as a remedy for indigestion. The flower of Angoumoisin aristocracy was summoned to hear Lucien read his great work. Louise had hidden all the difficulties from her friend, but she let fall a few words touching the social cabal formed against him; she would not have him ignorant of the perils besetting his career as a man of genius, nor of the obstacles insurmountable to weaklings. She drew a lesson from the recent victory. Her white hands pointed him to glory that lay beyond a prolonged martyrdom; she spoke of stakes and flaming pyres; she spread the adjectives thickly on her finest *tartines,* and decorated them with a variety of her most pompous epithets. It was an infringement of the copyright of the passages of declamation that disfigure *Corinne;* but Louise grew so much the greater in her own eyes as she talked, that she loved the Benjamin who inspired her eloquence the more for it. She counselled him to take a bold step and renounce his patronymic for the noble name of Rubempré; he need not mind the tittle-tattle over a change which the King, for that matter, would authorize. Mme. de Bargeton undertook to procure this favor; she was related to the Marquise d'Espard, who was a Blamont-Chauvry before her marriage, and a *persona grata* at Court. The words "King," "Marquise d'Espard," and "the Court" dazzled Lucien like a blaze of fireworks, and the necessity of the baptism was plain to him.

"Dear child," said Louise, with tender mockery in her tones, "the sooner it is done, the sooner it will be sanctioned."

She went through social strata and showed the poet that this step would raise him many rungs higher in the ladder.

Seizing the moment, she persuaded Lucien to forswear the chimerical notions of '89 as to equality; she roused a thirst for social distinction allayed by David's cool commonsense; she pointed out fashionable society as the goal and the only stage for such a talent as his. The rabid Liberal became a Monarchist *in petto;* Lucien set his teeth in the apple of desire of rank, luxury, and fame. He swore to win a crown to lay at his lady's feet, even if there should be blood-stains on the bays. He would conquer at any cost, *quibuscumque viis.* To prove his courage, he told her of his present way of life; Louise had known nothing of its hardships, for there is an indefinable pudency inseparable from strong feeling in youth, a delicacy which shrinks from a display of great qualities; and a young man loves to have the real quality of his nature discerned through the incognito. He described that life, the shackles of poverty borne with pride, his days of work for David, his nights of study. His young ardor recalled memories of the colonel of six-and-twenty; Mme. de Bargeton's eyes grew soft; and Lucien, seeing this weakness in his awe-inspiring mistress, seized a hand that she abandoned to him, and kissed it with the frenzy of a lover and a poet in his youth. Louise even allowed him to set his eager, quivering lips upon her forehead.

"Oh, child! child! if any one should see us, I should look very ridiculous," she said, shaking off the ecstatic torpor.

In the course of that evening, Mme. de Bargeton's wit made havoc of Lucien's prejudices, as she styled them. Men of genius, according to her doctrine, had neither brothers nor sisters nor father nor mother; the great tasks laid upon them required that they should sacrifice everything that they might grow to their full stature. Perhaps their families might suffer at first from the all-absorbing exactions of a giant brain, but at a later day they were repaid a hundred-fold for self-denial of every kind during the early struggles of the kingly intellect with adverse fate; they shared the spoils of victory. Genius was answerable to no man. Genius alone could judge of the means used to an end which no one

else could know. It was the duty of a man of genius, therefore, to set himself above law; it was his mission to reconstruct law; the man who is master of his age may take all that he needs, run any risks, for all is his. She quoted instances. Bernard Palissy, Louis XI., Fox, Napoleon, Christopher Columbus, and Julius Cæsar,—all these world-famous gamblers had begun life hampered with debt, or as poor men; all of them had been misunderstood, taken for madmen, reviled for bad sons, bad brothers, bad fathers; and yet in after life each one had come to be the pride of his family, of his country, of the civilized world.

Her arguments fell upon fertile soil in the worst of Lucien's nature, and spread corruption in his heart; for him, when his desires were hot, all means were admissible. But—failure is high treason against society; and when the fallen conqueror has run amuck through *bourgeois* virtues, and pulled down the pillars of society, small wonder that society, finding Marius seated among the ruins, should drive him forth in abhorrence. All unconsciously Lucien stood with the palm of genius on the one hand and a shameful ending in the hulks upon the other; and, on high upon the Sinai of the prophets, beheld no Dead Sea covering the cities of the plain—the hideous winding-sheet of Gomorrah.

So well did Louise loosen the swaddling-bands of provincial life that confined the heart and brain of her poet that the said poet determined to try an experiment upon her. He wished to feel certain that this proud conquest was his without laying himself open to the mortification of a rebuff. The forthcoming soirée gave him his opportunity. Ambition blended with his love. He loved, and he meant to rise, a double desire not unnatural in young men with a heart to satisfy and the battle of life to fight. Society, summoning all her children to one banquet, arouses ambition in the very morning of life. Youth is robbed of its charm, and generous thoughts are corrupted by mercenary scheming. The idealist would fain have it otherwise, but intrusive fact too often gives the lie to the fiction which we should like to believe, making

it impossible to paint the young man of the nineteenth century other than he is. Lucien imagined that his scheming was entirely prompted by good feeling, and persuaded himself that it was done solely for his friend David's sake.

He wrote a long letter to his Louise; he felt bolder, pen in hand, than face to face. In a dozen sheets, copied out three several times, he told her of his father's genius and blighted hopes and of his grinding poverty. He described his beloved sister as an angel, and David as another Cuvier, a great man of the future, and a father, friend, and brother to him in the present. He should feel himself unworthy of his Louise's love (his proudest distinction) if he did not ask her to do for David all that she had done for him. He would give up everything rather than desert David Séchard; David must witness his success. It was one of those wild letters in which a young man points a pistol at a refusal, letters full of boyish casuistry and the incoherent reasoning of an idealist; a delicious tissue of words embroidered here and there by the naïve utterances that women love so well—unconscious revelations of the writer's heart.

Lucien left the letter with the housemaid, went to the office, and spent the day in reading proofs, superintending the execution of orders, and looking after the affairs of the printing-house. He said not a word to David. While youth bears a child's heart, it is capable of sublime reticence. Perhaps, too, Lucien began to dread the Phocion's axe which David would wield when he chose, perhaps he was afraid to meet those clear-sighted eyes that read the depths of his soul. But when he read Chénier's poems with David, his secret rose from his heart to his lips at the sting of a reproach that he felt as the patient feels the probing of a wound.

And now try to understand the thoughts that troubled Lucien's mind as he went down from Angoulême. Was the great lady angry with him? Would she receive David? Had he, Lucien, in his ambition, flung himself headlong back into the depths of L'Houmeau? Before he set that kiss on Louise's fore-

head, he had had time to measure the distance between a queen and her favorite, so far had he come in five months, and he did not tell himself that David could cross over the same ground in a moment. Yet he did not know how completely the lower orders were excluded from this upper world; he did not so much as suspect that a second experiment of this kind meant ruin for Mme. de Bargeton. Once accused and fairly convicted of a liking for *canaille,* Louise would be driven from the place, her caste would shun her as men shunned a leper in the Middle Ages. Naïs might have broken the moral law, and her whole circle, the clergy and the flower of the aristocracy, would have defended her against the world through thick and thin; but a breach of another law, the offence of admitting all sorts of people to her house—this was sin without remission. The sins of those in power are always overlooked—once let them abdicate, and they shall pay the penalty. And what was it but abdication to receive David?

But if Lucien did not see these aspects of the question, his aristocratic instinct discerned plenty of difficulties of another kind, and he took alarm. A fine manner is not the invariable outcome of noble feeling; and while no man at court had a nobler air than Racine, Corneille looked very much like a cattle-dealer, and Descartes might have been taken for an honest Dutch merchant; and visitors to La Brède, meeting Montesquieu in a cotton nightcap, carrying a rake over his shoulder, mistook him for a gardener. A knowledge of the world, when it is not sucked in with mother's milk and part of the inheritance of descent, is only acquired by education, supplemented by certain gifts of chance—a graceful figure, distinction of feature, a certain ring in the voice. All these so important trifles David lacked, while Nature had bestowed them upon his friend. Of gentle blood on the mother's side, Lucien was a Frank, even down to the high-arched instep. David had inherited the physique of his father the pressman and the flat foot of the Gael. Lucien could hear the shower of jokes at David's expense; he could see Mme. de Bargeton's repressed smile; and at length, without being ex-

actly ashamed of his brother, he made up his mind to disregard his first impulse and to think twice before yielding to it in future.

So, after the hour of poetry and self-sacrifice, after the reading of verse that opened out before the friends the fields of literature in the light of a newly-risen sun, the hour of worldly wisdom and of scheming struck for Lucien.

Down once more in L'Houmeau he wished that he had not written that letter; he wished he could have it back again; for down the vista of the future he caught a glimpse of the inexorable laws of the world. He guessed that nothing succeeds like success, and it cost him something to step down from the first rung of the scaling ladder by which he meant to reach and storm the heights above. Pictures of his quiet and simple life rose before him, pictures fair with the brightest colors of blossoming love. There was David; what a genius David had—David who had helped him so generously, and would die for him at need; he thought of his mother, of how great a lady she was in her lowly lot, and how she thought that he was as good as he was clever; then of his sister so gracious in submission to her fate, of his own innocent childhood and conscience as yet unstained, of budding hopes undespoiled by rough winds, and at these thoughts the past broke into flowers once more for his memory.

Then he told himself that it was a far finer thing to hew his own way through serried hostile mobs of aristocrats or philistines by repeated successful strokes, than to reach the goal through a woman's favor. Sooner or later his genius should shine out; it had been so with the others, his predecessors; they had tamed society. Women would love him when that day came! The example of Napoleon, which, unluckily for this nineteenth century of ours, has filled a great many ordinary persons with aspirations after extraordinary destinies,—the example of Napoleon occurred to Lucien's mind. He flung his schemes to the winds and blamed himself for thinking of them. For Lucien was so made that he went from evil to good, or from good to evil, with the same facility.

Lucien had none of the scholar's love for his retreat; for the past month indeed he had felt something like shame at the sight of the shop front, where you could read—

POSTEL (LATE CHARDON), PHARMACEUTICAL CHEMIST,

in yellow letters on a green ground. It was an offense to him that his father's name should be thus posted up in a place where every carriage passed.

Every evening, when he closed the ugly iron gate and went up to Beaulieu to give his arm to Mme. de Bargeton among the dandies of the upper town, he chafed beyond all reason at the disparity between his lodging and his fortune.

"I love Mme. de Bargeton; perhaps in a few days she will be mine, yet here I live in this rat-hole!" he said to himself this evening, as he went down the narrow passage into the little yard behind the shop. This evening bundles of boiled herbs were spread out along the wall, the apprentice was scouring a cauldron, and M. Postel himself, girded about with his laboratory apron, was standing with a retort in his hand, inspecting some chemical product while keeping an eye upon the shop door, or if the eye happened to be engaged, he had at any rate an ear for the bell.

A strong scent of camomile and peppermint pervaded the yard and the poor little dwelling at the side, which you reached by a short ladder, with a rope on either side by way of hand-rail. Lucien's room was an attic just under the roof.

"Good-day, sonny," said M. Postel, that typical, provincial tradesman. "Are you pretty middling? I have just been experimenting on treacle, but it would take a man like your father to find what I am looking for. Ah! he was a famous chemist, he was! If I had only known his gout specific, you and I should be rolling along in our carriage this day."

The little druggist, whose head was as thick as his heart was kind, never let a week pass without some allusion to Chardon senior's unlucky secretiveness as to that discovery, words that Lucien felt like a stab.

"It is a great pity," Lucien answered curtly. He was beginning to think his father's apprentice prodigiously vulgar, though he had blessed the man for his kindness, for honest Postel had helped his master's widow and children more than once.

"Why, what is the matter with you?" M. Postel inquired, putting down his test tube on the laboratory table.

"Is there a letter for me?"

"Yes, a letter that smells like balm! it is lying on the counter near my desk."

Mme. de Bargeton's letter lying among the physic bottles in a druggist's shop! Lucien sprang in to rescue it.

"Be quick, Lucien! your dinner has been waiting an hour for you, it will be cold!" a sweet voice called gently through a half-opened window; but Lucien did not hear.

"That brother of yours has gone crazy, mademoiselle," said Postel, lifting his face.

The old bachelor looked rather like a miniature brandy cask, embellished by a painter's fancy, with a fat, ruddy countenance much pitted with the smallpox; at the sight of Eve his face took a ceremonious and amiable expression, which said plainly that he had thoughts of espousing the daughter of his predecessor, but could not put an end to the strife between love and interest in his heart. He often said to Lucien, with a smile, "Your sister is uncommonly pretty, and you are not so bad looking neither! Your father did everything well."

Eve was tall, dark-haired, dark of complexion, and blue-eyed; but notwithstanding these signs of virile character, she was gentle, tender-hearted, and devoted to those she loved. Her frank innocence, her simplicity, her quiet acceptance of a hard-working life, her character—for her life was above reproach—could not fail to win David Séchard's heart. So, since the first time that these two had met, a repressed and single-hearted love had grown up between them in the German fashion, quietly, with no fervid protestations. In their secret souls they thought of each other as if there were a bar

between that kept them apart; as if the thought were an offense against some jealous husband; and hid their feelings from Lucien as though their love in some way did him a wrong. David, moreover, had no confidence in himself, and could not believe that Eve could care for him; Eve was a penniless girl, and therefore shy. A real work-girl would have been bolder; but Eve, gently bred, and fallen into poverty, resigned herself to her dreary lot. Diffident as she seemed, she was in reality proud, and would not make a single advance towards the son of a father said to be rich. People who knew the value of a growing property, said that the vineyard at Marsac was worth more than eighty thousand francs, to say nothing of the traditional bits of land which old Séchard used to buy as they came into the market, for old Séchard had savings—he was lucky with his vintages, and a clever salesman. Perhaps David was the only man in Angoulême who knew nothing of his father's wealth. In David's eyes Marsac was a hovel bought in 1810 for fifteen or sixteen thousand francs, a place that he saw once a year at vintage time when his father walked him up and down among the vines and boasted of an output of wine which the young printer never saw, and he cared nothing about it.

David was a student leading a solitary life; and the love that gained even greater force in solitude, as he dwelt upon the difficulties in the way, was timid, and looked for encouragement; for David stood more in awe of Eve than a simple clerk of some high-born lady. He was awkward and ill at ease in the presence of his idol, and as eager to hurry away as he had been to come. He repressed his passion, and was silent. Often of an evening, on some pretext of consulting Lucien, he would leave the Place du Mûrier and go down through the Palet Gate as far as L'Houmeau, but at the sight of the green iron railings his heart failed. Perhaps he had come too late, Eve might think him a nuisance; she would be in bed by this time no doubt; and so he turned back. But though his great love had only appeared in trifles, Eve read it clearly; she was proud, without a touch of vanity in her

pride, of the deep reverence in David's looks and words and manner towards her, but it was the young printer's enthusiastic belief in Lucien that drew her to him most of all. He had divined the way to win Eve. The mute delights of this love of theirs differed from the transports of stormy passion, as wildflowers in the fields from the brilliant flowers in garden beds. Interchange of glances, delicate and sweet as blue water-flowers on the surface of the stream; a look in either face, vanishing as swiftly as the scent of briar-rose; melancholy, tender as the velvet of moss—these were the blossoms of two rare natures, springing up out of a rich and fruitful soil on foundations of rock. Many a time Eve had seen revelations of the strength that lay below the appearance of weakness, and made such full allowance for all that David left undone, that the slightest word now might bring about a closer union of soul and soul.

Eve opened the door, and Lucien sat down without a word at the little table on an X-shaped trestle. There was no tablecloth; the poor little household boasted but three silver spoons and forks, and Eve had laid them all for the dearly loved brother.

"What have you there?" she asked, when she had set a dish on the table, and put the extinguisher on the portable stove, where it had been kept hot for him.

Lucien did not answer. Eve took up a little plate, daintily garnished with vine-leaves, and set it on the table with a jug full of cream.

"There, Lucien, I have had strawberries for you."

But Lucien was so absorbed in his letter that he did not hear a word. Eve came to sit beside him without a murmur; for in a sister's love for a brother it is an element of great pleasure to be treated without ceremony.

"Oh! what is it?" she cried as she saw tears shining in her brother's eyes.

"Nothing, nothing, Eve," he said, and putting his arm about her waist, he drew her towards him and kissed her forehead, her hair, her throat, with warmth that surprised her.

"You are keeping something from me."

"Well, then—she loves me."

"I knew very well that you kissed me for somebody else," the poor sister pouted, flushing red.

"We shall all be happy," cried Lucien, swallowing great spoonfuls of soup.

"*We?*" echoed Eve. The same presentiment that had crossed David's mind prompted her to add, "You will not care so much about us now."

"How can you think that, if you know me?"

Eve put out her hand and grasped his tightly; then she carried off the empty plate and the brown earthern soup-tureen, and brought the dish that she had made for him. But instead of eating his dinner, Lucien read his letter over again; and Eve, discreet maiden, did not ask another question, respecting her brother's silence. If he wished to tell her about it, she could wait; if he did not, how could she ask him to tell her? She waited. Here is the letter:—

"My friend,—Why should I refuse to your brother in science the help that I have lent you? All merits have equal rights in my eyes; but you do not know the prejudices of those among whom I live. We shall never make an aristocracy of ignorance understand that intellect ennobles. If I have not sufficient influence to compel them to accept M. David Séchard, I am quite willing to sacrifice the worthless creatures to you. It would be a perfect hecatomb in the antique manner. But, dear friend, you would not, of course, ask me to leave them all in exchange for the society of a person whose character and manners might not please me. I know from your flatteries how easily friendship can be blinded. Will you think the worse of me if I attach a condition to my consent? In the interests of your future I should like to see your friend, and know and decide for myself whether you are not mistaken. What is this but the mother's anxious care of my dear poet, which I am in duty bound to take?

"Louise de Négrepelisse."

Lucien had no suspicion of the art with which polite society puts forward a "Yes" on the way to a "No," and a "No" that leads to a "Yes." He took this note for a victory. David should go to Mme. de Bargeton's house! David would shine there in all the majesty of his genius! He raised his head so proudly in the intoxication of a victory which increased his belief in himself and his ascendency over others, his face was so radiant with the brightness of many hopes, that his sister could not help telling him that he looked handsome.

"If that woman has any sense, she must love you! And if so, to-night she will be vexed, for all the ladies will try all sorts of coquetries on you. How handsome you will look when you read your *Saint John in Patmos!* If only I were a mouse, and could just slip in and see it! Come, I have put your clothes out in mother's room."

The mother's room bore witness to self-respecting poverty. There were white curtains to the walnut wood bedstead, and a strip of cheap green carpet at the foot. A chest of drawers with a wooden top, a looking-glass, and a few walnut wood chairs completed the furniture. The clock on the chimney-piece told of the old vanished days of prosperity. White curtains hung in the windows, a gray flowered paper covered the walls, and the tiled floor, colored and waxed by Eve herself, shone with cleanliness. On the little round table in the middle of the room stood a red tray with a pattern of gilt roses, and three cups and a sugar-basin of Limoges porcelain. Eve slept in the little adjoining closet, where there was just room for a narrow bed, an old-fashioned low chair, and a work-table by the window; there was about as much space as there is in a ship's cabin, and the door always stood open for the sake of air. But if all these things spoke of great poverty, the atmosphere was sedate and studious; and for those who knew the mother and children, there was something touchingly appropriate in their surroundings.

Lucien was tying his cravat when David's step sounded outside in the little yard, and in another moment the young

printer appeared. From his manner and looks he seemed to have come down in a hurry.

"Well, David!" cried the ambitious poet, "we have gained the day! She loves me! You shall come too."

"No," David said with some confusion, "I came down to thank you for this proof of friendship, but I have been thinking things over seriously. My own life is cut out for me, Lucien. I am David Séchard, printer to His Majesty in Angoulême, with my name at the bottom of the bills posted on every wall. For people of that class, I am an artisan, or I am in business, if you like it better, but I am a craftsman who lives over a shop in the Rue de Beaulieu at the corner of the Place du Mûrier. I have not the wealth of a Keller just yet, nor the name of a Desplein, two sorts of power that the nobles still try to ignore, and—and I am so far agreed with them—this power is nothing without a knowledge of the world and the manners of a gentleman. How am I to prove my claim to this sudden elevation? I should only make myself a laughing-stock for nobles and *bourgeoisie* to boot. As for you, your position is different. A foreman is not committed to anything. You are busy gaining knowledge that will be indispensable by and by; you can explain your present work by your future. And, in any case, you can leave your place to-morrow and begin something else; you might study law or diplomacy, or go into the civil service. Nobody has docketed and pigeon-holed *you,* in fact. Take advantage of your social maiden fame to walk alone and grasp honors. Enjoy all pleasures gladly, even frivolous pleasures. I wish you luck, Lucien; I shall enjoy your success; you will be like a second self for me. Yes, in my own thoughts I shall live your life. You shall have the holiday life, in the glare of the world and among the swift working springs of intrigue. I will lead the work-a-day life, the tradesman's life of sober toil, and the patient labor of scientific research.

"You shall be our aristocracy," he went on, looking at Eve as he spoke. "If you totter, you shall have my arm to steady you. If you have reason to complain of the treachery of

others, you will find a refuge in our hearts, the love there will never change. And influence and favor and the goodwill of others might fail us if we were two; we should stand in each other's way; go forward, you can tow me after you if it comes to that. So far from envying you, I will dedicate my life to yours. The thing that you have just done for me, when you risked the loss of your benefactress, your love it may be, rather than forsake or disown me, that little thing, so great as it was —ah, well, Lucien, that in itself would bind me to you forever if we were not brothers already. Have no remorse, no concern over seeming to take the larger share. This one-sided bargain is exactly to my taste. And, after all, suppose that you should give me a pang now and again, who knows that I shall not still be your debtor all my life long?"

He looked timidly towards Eve as he spoke; her eyes were full of tears, she saw all that lay below the surface.

"In fact," he went on, turning to Lucien, who stood amazed at this, "you are well made, you have a graceful figure, you wear your clothes with an air, you look like a gentleman in that blue coat of yours with the yellow buttons and the plain nankeen trousers; now I should look like a workingman among those people, I should be awkward and out of my element, I should say foolish things, or say nothing at all; but as for you, you can overcome any prejudice as to names by taking your mother's; you can call yourself Lucien de Rubempré; I am and always shall be David Séchard. In this society that you frequent, everything tells for you, everything would tell against me. You were born to shine in it. Women will worship that angel face of yours; won't they, Eve?"

Lucien sprang up and flung his arms about David. David's humility had made short work of many doubts and plenty of difficulties. Was it possible not to feel twice tenderly towards this friend, who by the way of friendship had come to think the very thoughts that he, Lucien, had reached through ambition? The aspirant for love and honors felt that the way had been made smooth for him; the young man

and the comrade felt all his heart go out towards his friend.

It was one of those moments that come very seldom in our lives, when all the forces in us are sweetly strung, and every chord vibrating gives out full resonance.

And yet, this goodness of a noble nature increased Lucien's human tendency to take himself as the centre of things. Do not all of us say more or less, *"L'État, c'est moi!"* with Louis Quatorze? Lucien's mother and sister had concentrated all their tenderness on him, David was his devoted friend; he was accustomed to see the three making every effort for him in secret, and consequently he had all the faults of a spoiled eldest son. The noble is eaten up with the egoism which their unselfishness was fostering in Lucien; and Mme. de Bargeton was doing her best to develop the same fault by inciting him to forget all that he owed to his sister, and mother, and David. He was far from doing so as yet; but was there not ground for the fear that as his sphere of ambition widened, his whole thought perforce would be how he might maintain himself in it?

When emotion had subsided, David had a suggestion to make. He thought that Lucien's poem, *Saint John in Patmos,* was possibly too biblical to be read before an audience but little familiar with apocalyptic poetry. Lucien, making his first appearance before the most exacting public in the Charente, seemed to be nervous. David advised him to take André de Chénier and substitute certain pleasure for a dubious delight. Lucien was a perfect reader, the listeners would enjoy listening to him, and his modesty would doubtless serve him well. Like most young people, the pair were endowing the rest of the world with their own intelligence and virtues; for if youth that has not yet gone astray is pitiless for the sins of others, it is ready, on the other hand, to put a magnificent faith in them. It is only, in fact, after a good deal of experience of life that we recognize the truth of Raphael's great saying—"To comprehend is to equal."

The power of appreciating poetry is rare, generally speaking, in France; *esprit* soon dries up the source of the sacred

tears of ecstasy; nobody cares to be at the trouble of deciphering the sublime, of plumbing the depths to discover the infinite. Lucien was about to have his first experience of the ignorance and indifference of worldlings. He went round by way of the printing office for David's volume of poetry.

The two lovers were left alone, and David had never felt more embarrassed in his life. Countless terrors seized upon him; he half wished, half feared that Eve would praise him; he longed to run away, for even modesty is not exempt from coquetry. David was afraid to utter a word that might seem to beg for thanks; everything that he could think of put him in some false position, so he held his tongue and looked guilty. Eve, guessing the agony of modesty, was enjoying the pause; but when David twisted his hat as if he meant to go, she looked at him and smiled.

"Monsieur David," she said, "if you are not going to pass the evening at Mme. de Bargeton's, we can spend the time together. It is fine; shall we take a walk along the Charente? We will have a talk about Lucien."

David longed to fling himself at the feet of this delicious girl. Eve had rewarded him beyond his hopes by that tone in her voice; the kindness of her accent had solved the difficulties of the position, her suggestion was something better than praise; it was the first grace given by love.

"But give me time to dress!" she said, as David made as if to go at once.

David went out; he who all his life long had not known one tune from another, was humming to himself; honest Postel hearing him with surprise, conceived a vehement suspicion of Eve's feelings towards the printer.

The most trifling things that happened that evening made a great impression on Lucien, and his character was peculiarly susceptible to first impressions. Like all inexperienced lovers, he arrived so early that Louise was not in the drawing-room; but M. de Bargeton was there, alone. Lucien had already begun to serve his apprenticeship in the practice of the small

deceits with which the lover of a married woman pays for his happiness—deceits through which, moreover, she learns the extent of her power; but so far Lucien had not met the lady's husband face to face.

M. de Bargeton's intellect was of the limited kind, exactly poised on the border line between harmless vacancy, with some glimmerings of sense, and the excessive stupidity that can neither take in nor give out any idea. He was thoroughly impressed with the idea of doing his duty in society; and, doing his utmost to be agreeable, had adopted the smile of an opera dancer as his sole method of expression. Satisfied, he smiled; dissatisfied, he smiled again. He smiled at good news and evil tidings; with slight modifications the smile did duty on all occasions. If he was positively obliged to express his personal approval, a complacent laugh reinforced the smile; but he never vouchsafed a word until driven to the last extremity. A *tête-à-tête* put him in the one embarrassment of his vegetative existence, for then he was obliged to look for something to say in the vast blank of his vacant interior. He usually got out of the difficulty by a return to the artless ways of childhood; he thought aloud, took you into his confidence concerning the smallest details of his existence, his physical wants, the small sensations which did duty for ideas with him. He never talked about the weather, nor did he indulge in the ordinary commonplaces of conversation—the way of escape provided for weak intellects; he plunged you into the most intimate and personal topics.

"I took veal this morning to please Mme. de Bargeton, who is very fond of veal, and my stomach has been very uneasy since," he would tell you. "I knew how it would be; it never suits me. How do you explain it?" Or, very likely—

"I am just about to ring for a glass of *eau sucrée;* will you have some at the same time?"

Or, "I am going to take a ride to-morrow; I am going over to see my father-in-law."

These short observations did not permit of discussion; a "Yes" or "No," extracted from his interlocutor, the con-

versation dropped dead. Then M. de Bargeton mutely implored his visitor to come to his assistance. Turning westward his old asthmatic pug-dog countenance, he gazed at you with big, lustreless eyes, in a way that said, "You were saying?"

The people whom he loved best were bores anxious to talk about themselves; he listened to them with an unfeigned and delicate interest which so endeared him to the species that all the twaddlers of Angoulême credited M. de Bargeton with more understanding than he chose to show, and were of the opinion that he was underrated. So it happened that when these persons could find nobody else to listen to them, they went off to give M. de Bargeton the benefit of the rest of the story, argument, or what not, sure beforehand of his eulogistic smile. Madame de Bargeton's rooms were always crowded, and generally her husband felt quite at his ease. He interested himself in the smallest details; he watched those who came in and bowed and smiled, and brought the new arrivals to his wife; he lay in wait for departing visitors, and went with them to the door, taking leave of them with that eternal smile. When conversation grew lively, and he saw that every one was interested in one thing or another, he stood, happy and mute, planted like a swan on both feet, listening, to all appearance, to a political discussion; or he looked over the card-players' hands without a notion of what it was all about, for he could not play at any game; or he walked about and took snuff to promote digestion. Anaïs was the bright side of his life; she made it unspeakably pleasant for him. Stretched out at full length in his armchair, he watched admiringly while she did her part as hostess, for she talked for him. It was a pleasure, too, to him to try to see the point in her remarks; and as it was often a good while before he succeeded, his smiles appeared after a delay, like the explosion of a shell which has entered the earth and worked up again. His respect for his wife, moreover, almost amounted to adoration. And so long as we can adore, is there not happiness enough in life?

Anaïs' husband was as docile as a child who asks nothing better than to be told what to do; and, generous and clever woman as she was, she had taken no undue advantage of his weaknesses. She had taken care of him as you take care of a cloak; she kept him brushed, neat, and tidy, looked closely after him, and humored him; and humored, looked after, brushed, kept tidy, and cared for, M. de Bargeton had come to feel an almost dog-like affection for his wife. It is so easy to give happiness that costs nothing! Mme. de Bargeton, knowing that her husband had no pleasure but in good cheer, saw that he had good dinners; she had pity upon him, she had never uttered a word of complaint; indeed, there were people who could not understand that a woman might keep silence through pride, and argued that M. de Bargeton must possess good qualities hidden from public view. Mme. de Bargeton had drilled him into military subordination; he yielded a passive obedience to his wife. "Go and call on Monsieur So-and-So or Madame Such-an-One," she would say, and he went forthwith, like a soldier at the word of command. He stood at attention in her presence, and waited motionless for his orders.

There was some talk about this time of nominating the mute gentleman for a deputy. Lucien as yet had not lifted the veil which hid such an unimaginable character; indeed, he had scarcely frequented the house long enough. M. de Bargeton, spread at full length in his great chair, appeared to see and understand all that was going on; his silence added to his dignity, and his figure inspired Lucien with a prodigious awe. It is the wont of imaginative natures to magnify everything, or to find a soul to inhabit every shape; and Lucien took this gentleman, not for a granite guard-post, but for a formidable sphinx, and thought it necessary to conciliate him.

"I am the first comer," he said, bowing with more respect than people usually showed the worthy man.

"That is natural enough," said M. de Bargeton.

Lucien took the remark for an epigram; the lady's hus-

band was jealous, he thought; he reddened under it, looked in the glass and tried to give himself a countenance.

"You live in L'Houmeau," said M. de Bargeton, "and people who live a long way off always come earlier than those who live near by."

"What is the reason of that?" asked Lucien politely.

"I don't know," answered M. de Bargeton, relapsing into immobility.

"You have not cared to find out," Lucien began again; "any one who could make that observation could discover the cause."

"Ah!" said M. de Bargeton, "final causes! Eh! eh! . . ."

The conversation came to a dead stop; Lucien racked his brains to resuscitate it.

"Mme. de Bargeton is dressing, no doubt," he began, shuddering at the silliness of the question.

"Yes, she is dressing," her husband naturally answered.

Lucien looked up at the ceiling and vainly tried to think of something else to say. As his eyes wandered over the gray painted joists and the spaces of plaster between, he saw, not without qualms, that the little chandelier with the old-fashioned cut-glass pendants had been stripped of its gauze covering and filled with wax candles. All the covers had been removed from the furniture, and the faded flowered silk damask had come to light. These preparations meant something extraordinary. The poet looked at his boots, and misgivings about his costume arose in his mind. Grown stupid with dismay, he turned and fixed his eyes on a Japanese jar standing on a begarlanded console table of the time of Louis Quinze; then, recollecting that he must conciliate Mme. de Bargeton's husband, he tried to find out if the good gentleman had a hobby of any sort in which he might be humored.

"You seldom leave the city, monsieur?" he began, returning to M. de Bargeton.

"Very seldom."

Silence again. M. de Bargeton watched Lucien's slightest

movements like a suspicious cat; the young man's presence disturbed him. Each was afraid of the other.

"Can he feel suspicious of my attentions?" thought Lucien; "he seems to be anything but friendly."

Lucien was not a little embarrassed by the uneasy glances that the other gave him as he went to and fro, when, luckily for him, the old man-servant (who wore livery for the occasion) announced "M. du Châtelet." The Baron came in, very much at his ease, greeted his friend Bargeton, and favored Lucien with the little nod then in vogue, which the poet in his mind called purse-proud impertinence.

Sixte du Châtelet appeared in a pair of dazzling white trousers with invisible straps that kept them in shape. He wore pumps and thread stockings; the black ribbon of his eyeglass meandered over a white waistcoat, and the fashion and elegance of Paris was strikingly apparent in his black coat. He was indeed just the faded beau who might be expected from his antecedents, though advancing years had already endowed him with a certain waist-girth which somewhat exceeded the limits of elegance. He had dyed the hair and whiskers grizzled by his sufferings during his travels, and this gave a hard look to his face. The skin which had once been so delicate had been tanned to the copper-red color of Europeans from India; but in spite of his absurd pretensions to youth, you could still discern traces of the Imperial Highness' charming private secretary in du Châtelet's general appearance. He put up his eyeglass and stared at his rival's nankeen trousers, at his boots, at his waistcoat, at the blue coat made by the Angoulême tailor, he looked him over from head to foot, in short, then he coolly returned his eyeglass to his waistcoat pocket with a gesture that said, "I am satisfied." And Lucien, eclipsed at this moment by the elegance of the inland revenue department, thought that it would be his turn by and by, when he should turn a face lighted up with poetry upon the assembly; but this prospect did not prevent him from feeling the sharp pang that succeeded to the uncomfortable sense of M. de Bargeton's imagined hostility.

The Baron seemed to bring all the weight of his fortune to bear upon him, the better to humiliate him in his poverty. M. de Bargeton had counted on having no more to say, and his soul was dismayed by the pause spent by the rivals in mutual survey; he had a question which he kept for desperate emergencies, laid up in his mind, as it were, against a rainy day. Now was the proper time to bring it out.

"Well, monsieur," he said, looking at Châtelet with an important air, "is there anything fresh? anything that people are talking about?"

"Why, the latest thing is M. Chardon," Châtelet said maliciously. "Ask him. Have you brought some charming poem for us?" inquired the vivacious Baron, adjusting the side curl that had gone astray on his temple.

"I should have asked you whether I had succeeded," Lucien answered; "you have been before me in the field of verse."

"Pshaw!" said the other, "a few vaudevilles, well enough in their way, written to oblige, a song now and again to suit some occasion, lines for music, no good without the music, and my long Epistle to a Sister of Buonaparte (ungrateful that he was), will not hand down my name to posterity."

At this moment Mme. de Bargeton appeared in all the glory of an elaborate toilette. She wore a Jewess' turban, enriched with an Eastern clasp. The cameos on her neck gleamed through the gauze scarf gracefully wound about her shoulders; the sleeves of her printed muslin dress were short, so as to display a series of bracelets on her shapely white arms. Lucien was charmed with this theatrical style of dress. M. du Châtelet gallantly plied the queen with fulsome compliments, that made her smile with pleasure; she was so glad to be praised in Lucien's hearing. But she scarcely gave her dear poet a glance, and met Châtelet with a mortifying civility that kept him at a distance.

By this time the guests began to arrive. First and foremost appeared the Bishop and his Vicar-General, dignified and reverend figures both, though no two men could well be more unlike, his lordship being tall and attenuated, and his

acolyte short and fat. Both churchmen's eyes were bright; but while the Bishop was pallid, his Vicar-General's countenance glowed with high health. Both were impassive, and gesticulated but little; both appeared to be prudent men, and their silence and reserve were supposed to hide great intellectual powers.

Close upon the two ecclesiastics followed Mme. de Chandour and her husband, a couple so extraordinary that those who are unfamiliar with provincial life might be tempted to think that such persons are purely imaginary. Amélie de Chandour posed as the rival queen of Angoulême; her husband, M. de Chandour, known in the circle as Stanislas, was a *ci-devant* young man, slim still at five-and-forty, with a countenance like a sieve. His cravat was always tied so as to present two menacing points—one spike reached the height of his right ear, the other pointed downwards to the red ribbon of his cross. His coat-tails were violently at strife. A cut-away waistcoat displayed the ample, swelling curves of a stiffly-starched shirt fastened by massive gold studs. His dress, in fact, was exaggerated, till he looked almost like a living caricature, which no one could behold for the first time with gravity.

Stanislas looked himself over from top to toe with a kind of satisfaction; he verified the number of his waistcoat buttons, and followed the curving outlines of his tight-fitting trousers with fond glances that came to a standstill at last on the pointed tips of his shoes. When he ceased to contemplate himself in this way, he looked towards the nearest mirror to see if his hair still kept in curl; then, sticking a finger in his waistcoat pocket, he looked about him at the women with happy eyes, flinging his head back in three-quarters profile with all the airs of a king of the poultry-yard, airs which were prodigiously admired by the aristocratic circle of which he was the beau. There was a strain of eighteenth century grossness, as a rule, in his talk; a detestable kind of conversation which procured him some success with women—he made them laugh. M. du Châtelet was beginning

to give this gentleman some uneasiness; and, as a matter of fact, since Mme. de Bargeton had taken him up, the lively interest taken by the women in the Byron of Angoulême was distinctly on the increase. His coxcomb superciliousness tickled their curiosity; he posed as the man whom nothing can arouse from his apathy, and his jaded Sultan airs were like a challenge.

Amélie de Chandour, short, plump, fair-complexioned, and dark-haired, was a poor actress; her voice was loud, like everything else about her; her head, with its load of feathers in winter and flowers in summer, was never still for a moment. She had a fine flow of conversation, though she could never bring a sentence to an end without a wheezing accompaniment from an asthma, to which she would not confess.

M. de Saintot, otherwise Astolphe, President of the Agricultural Society, a tall, stout, high-colored personage, usually appeared in the wake of his wife, Élisa, a lady with a countenance like a withered fern, called Lili by her friends—a baby name singularly at variance with its owner's character and demeanor. Mme. de Saintot was a solemn and extremely pious woman, and a very trying partner at a game of cards. Astolphe was supposed to be a scientific man of the first rank. He was as ignorant as a carp, but he had compiled the articles on Sugar and Brandy for a Dictionary of Agriculture by wholesale plunder of newspaper articles and pillage of previous writers. It was believed all over the department that M. Saintot was engaged upon a treatise on modern husbandry; but though he locked himself into his study every morning, he had not written a couple of pages in a dozen years. If anybody called to see him, he always contrived to be discovered rummaging among his papers, hunting for a stray note or mending a pen; but he spent the whole time in his study on puerilities, reading the newspaper through from end to end, cutting figures out of corks with his penknife, and drawing patterns on his blotting-paper. He would turn over the leaves of his Cicero to see if anything applicable to the events of the day might catch his eye, and drag his

quotation by the heels into the conversation that evening, saying, "There is a passage in Cicero which might have been written to suit modern times," and out came his phrase, to the astonishment of his audience. "Really," they said among themselves, "Astolphe is a well of learning." The interesting fact circulated all over the town, and sustained the general belief in M. de Saintot's abilities.

After this pair came M. de Bartas, known as Adrien among the circle. It was M. de Bartas who boomed out his song in a bass voice, and made prodigious claims to musical knowledge. His self-conceit had taken a stand upon solfeggi; he began by admiring his appearance while he sang, passed thence to talking about music, and finally to talking of nothing else. His musical tastes had become a monomania; he grew animated only on the one subject of music; he was miserable all evening until somebody begged him to sing. When he had bellowed one of his airs, he revived again; strutted about, raised himself on his heels, and received compliments with a deprecating air; but modesty did not prevent him from going from group to group for his meed of praise; and when there was no more to be said about the singer, he returned to the subject of the song, discussing its difficulties or extolling the composer.

M. Alexandre de Brébian performed heroic exploits in sepia; he disfigured the walls of his friends' rooms with a swarm of crude productions, and spoiled all the albums in the department. M. Alexandre de Brébian and M. de Bartas came together, each with his friend's wife on his arm, a cross-cornered arrangement which gossip declared to be carried out to the fullest extent. As for the two women, Mesdames Charlotte de Brébian and Josephine de Bartas, or Lolotte and Fifine, as they were called, both took an equal interest in a scarf, or the trimming of a dress, or the reconciliation of several irreconcilable colors; both were eaten up with a desire to look like Parisiennes, and neglected their homes, where everything went wrong. But if they dressed like dolls in tightly-fitting gowns of home manufacture, and

exhibited outrageous combinations of crude colors upon their persons, their husbands availed themselves of the artist's privilege and dressed as they pleased, and curious it was to see the provincial dowdiness of the pair. In their threadbare clothes they looked like the supernumeraries that represent rank and fashion at stage weddings in third-rate theatres.

One of the queerest figures in the rooms was M. le Comte de Senonches, known by the aristocratic name of Jacques, a mighty hunter, lean and sunburned, a haughty gentleman, about as amiable as a wild boar, as suspicious as a Venetian, and jealous as a Moor, who lived on terms of the friendliest and most perfect intimacy with M. du Hautoy, otherwise Francis, the friend of the house.

Mme. de Senonches (Zéphirine) was a tall, fine-looking woman, though her complexion was spoiled already by pimples due to liver complaint, on which grounds she was said to be exacting. With a slender figure and delicate proportions, she could afford to indulge in languid manners, savoring somewhat of affectation, but revealing passion and the consciousness that every least caprice will be gratified by love.

Francis, the house friend, was rather distinguished-looking. He had given up his consulship in Valence, and sacrificed his diplomatic prospects to live near Zéphirine (also known as Zizine) in Angoulême. He had taken the household in charge, he superintended the children's education, taught them foreign languages, and looked after the fortunes of M. and Mme. de Senonches with the most complete devotion. Noble Angoulême, administrative Angoulême, and *bourgeois* Angoulême alike had looked askance for a long while at this phenomenon of the perfect union of three persons; but finally the mysterious conjugal trinity appeared to them so rare and pleasing a spectacle, that if M. du Hautoy had shown any intention of marrying, he would have been thought monstrously immoral. Mme. de Senonches, however, had a lady companion, a goddaughter, and her excessive attachment to this Mlle. de la Haye was beginning to raise

surmises of disquieting mysteries; it was thought, in spite of some impossible discrepancies in dates, that Françoise de la Haye bore a striking likeness to Francis du Hautoy.

When "Jacques" was shooting in the neighborhood, people used to inquire after Francis, and Jacques would discourse on his steward's little ailments, and talk of his wife in the second place. So curious did this blindness seem in a man of jealous temper, that his greatest friends used to draw him out on the topic for the amusement of others who did not know of the mystery. M. du Hautoy was a finical dandy whose minute care of himself had degenerated into mincing affectation and childishness. He took an interest in his cough, his appetite, his digestion, his night's rest. Zéphirine had succeeded in making a valetudinarian of her factotum; she coddled him and doctored him; she crammed him with delicate fare, as if he had been a fine lady's lap-dog; she embroidered waistcoats for him and pocket-handkerchiefs and cravats until he became so used to wearing finery that she transformed him into a kind of Japanese idol. Their understanding was perfect. In season and out of season Zizine consulted Francis with a look, and Francis seemed to take his ideas from Zizine's eyes. They frowned and smiled together, and seemingly took counsel of each other before making the simplest commonplace remark.

The largest landowner in the neighborhood, a man whom every one envied, was the Marquis de Pimentel; he and his wife, between them, had an income of forty thousand livres, and spent their winters in Paris. This evening they had driven into Angoulême in their calèche, and had brought their neighbors, the Baron and Baroness de Rastignac and their party, the Baroness' aunt and daughters, two charming young ladies, penniless girls who had been carefully brought up, and were dressed in the simple way that sets off natural loveliness.

These personages, beyond question the first in the company, met with a reception of chilling silence; the respect paid to them was full of jealousy, especially as everybody

saw that Mme. de Bargeton paid marked attention to the guests. The two families belonged to the very small minority who hold themselves aloof from provincial gossip, belong to no clique, live quietly in retirement, and maintain a dignified reserve. M. de Pimentel and M. de Rastignac, for instance, were addressed by their names in full, and no length of acquaintance had brought their wives and daughters into the select coterie of Angoulême; both families were too nearly connected with the Court to compromise themselves through provincial follies.

The Prefect and the General in command of the garrison were the last comers, and with them came the country gentleman who had brought the treatise on silkworms to David that very morning. Evidently he was the mayor of some canton or other, and a fine estate was his sufficient title to gentility; but from his appearance, it was plain that he was quite unused to polite society. He looked uneasy in his clothes, he was at a loss to know what to do with his hands, he shifted about from one foot to another as he spoke, and half rose and sat down again when anybody spoke to him. He seemed ready to do some menial service; he was obsequious, nervous, and grave by turns, laughing eagerly at every joke, listening with servility; and occasionally, imagining that people were laughing at him, he assumed a knowing air. His treatise weighed upon his mind; again and again he tried to talk about silkworms; but the luckless wight happened first upon M. de Bartas, who talked music in reply, and next on M. de Saintot, who quoted Cicero to him; and not until the evening was half over did the mayor meet with sympathetic listeners in Mme. and Mlle. du Brossard, a widowed gentlewoman and her daughter.

Mme. and Mlle. du Brossard were not the least interesting persons in the clique, but their story may be told in a single phrase—they were as poor as they were noble. In their dress there was just that tinge of pretension which betrays carefully hidden penury. The daughter, a big, heavy young woman of seven-and-twenty, was supposed to be a good per-

former on the piano, and her mother praised her in season and out of season in the clumsiest way. No eligible man had any taste which Camille did not share on her mother's authoritative statement. Mme. du Brossard, in her anxiety to establish her child, was capable of saying that her dear Camille liked nothing so much as a roving life from one garrison to another; and before the evening was out, that she was sure her dear Camille liked a quiet country farmhouse existence of all things. Mother and daughter had the pinched sub-acid dignity characteristic of those who have learned by experience the exact value of expressions of sympathy; they belonged to a class which the world delights to pity; they had been the objects of the benevolent interest of egoism; they had sounded the empty void beneath the consoling formulas with which the world ministers to the necessities of the unfortunate.

M. de Séverac was fifty-nine years old, and a childless widower. Mother and daughter listened, therefore, with devout admiration to all that he told them about his silkworm nurseries.

"My daughter has always been fond of animals," said the mother. "And as women are especially interested in the silk which the little creatures produce, I shall ask permission to go over to Séverac, so that my Camille may see how the silk is spun. My Camille is so intelligent, she will grasp anything that you tell her in a moment. Did she not understand one day the inverse ratio of the squares of distances!"

This was the remark that brought the conversation between Mme. du Brossard and M. de Séverac to a glorious close after Lucien's reading that night.

A few habitués slipped in familiarly among the rest, so did one or two eldest sons; shy, mute young men tricked out in gorgeous jewelry, and highly honored by an invitation to this literary solemnity, the boldest man among them so far shook off the weight of awe as to chatter a good deal with Mlle. de la Haye. The women solemnly arranged themselves in a circle, and the men stood behind them. It was a quaint as-

semblage of wrinkled countenances and heterogeneous costumes, but none the less it seemed very alarming to Lucien, and his heart beat fast when he felt that every one was looking at him. His assurance bore the ordeal with some difficulty in spite of the encouraging example of Mme. de Bargeton, who welcomed the most illustrious personages of Angoulême with ostentatious courtesy and elaborate graciousness; and the uncomfortable feeling that oppressed him was aggravated by a trifling matter which any one might have foreseen, though it was bound to come as an unpleasant shock to a young man with so little experience of the world. Lucien, all eyes and ears, noticed that no one except Louise, M. de Bargeton, the Bishop, and some few who wished to please the mistress of the house, spoke of him as M. de Rubempré; for his formidable audience he was M. Chardon. Lucien's courage sank under their inquisitive eyes. He could read his plebeian name in the mere movements of their lips, and hear the anticipatory criticisms made in the blunt, provincial fashion that too often borders on rudeness. He had not expected this prolonged ordeal of pin-pricks; it put him still more out of humor with himself. He grew impatient to begin the reading, for then he could assume an attitude which should put an end to his mental torments; but Jacques was giving Mme. de Pimentel the history of his last day's sport; Adrien was holding forth to Mlle. Laure de Rastignac on Rossini, the newly-risen music star; and Astolphe, who had got by heart a newspaper paragraph on a patent plow, was giving the Baron the benefit of the description. Lucien, luckless poet that he was, did not know that there was scarce a soul in the room besides Mme. de Bargeton who could understand poetry. The whole matter-of-fact assembly was there by a misapprehension, nor did they, for the most part, know what they had come out for to see. There are some words that draw a public as unfailingly as the clash of cymbals, the trumpet, or the mountebank's big drum; "beauty," "glory," "poetry," are words that bewitch the coarsest intellect.

When every one had arrived; when the buzz of talk ceased

after repeated efforts on the part of M. de Bargeton, who, obedient to his wife, went round the room much as the beadle makes the circle of the church, tapping the pavement with his wand; when silence, in fact, was at last secured, Lucien went to the round table near Mme. de Bargeton. A fierce thrill of excitement ran through him as he did so. He announced in an uncertain voice that, to prevent disappointment, he was about to read the masterpieces of a great poet, discovered only recently (for although André de Chénier's poems appeared in 1819, no one in Angoulême had so much as heard of him). Everybody interpreted this announcement in one way—it was a shift of Mme. de Bargeton's, meant to save the poet's self-love and to put the audience at ease.

Lucien began with *Le Malade,* and the poem was received with a murmur of applause; but he followed it with *L'Aveugle,* which proved too great a strain upon the average intellect. None but artists or those endowed with the artistic temperament can understand and sympathize with him in the diabolical torture of that reading. If poetry is to be rendered by the voice, and if the listener is to grasp all that it means, the most devout attention is essential; there should be an intimate alliance between the reader and his audience, or swift and subtle communication of the poet's thought and feeling becomes impossible. Here this close sympathy was lacking, and Lucien in consequence was in the position of an angel who should endeavor to sing of heaven amid the chucklings of hell. An intelligent man in the sphere most stimulating to his faculties can see in every direction, like a snail; he has the keen scent of a dog, the ears of a mole; he can hear, and feel, and see all that is going on around him. A musician or a poet knows at once whether his audience is listening in admiration or fails to follow him, and feels it as the plant that revives or droops under favorable or unfavorable conditions. The men who had come with their wives had fallen to discussing their own affairs; by the acoustic law before mentioned, every murmur rang in

Lucien's ear; he saw all the gaps caused by the spasmodic workings of jaws sympathetically affected, the teeth that seemed to grin defiance at him.

When, like the dove in the deluge, he looked round for any spot on which his eyes might rest, he saw nothing but rows of impatient faces. Their owners clearly were waiting for him to make an end; they had come together to discuss questions of practical interest. With the exceptions of Laure de Rastignac, the Bishop, and two or three of the young men, they one and all looked bored. As a matter of fact, those who understand poetry strive to develop the germs of another poetry, quickened within them by the poet's poetry; but this glacial audience, so far from attaining to the spirit of the poet, did not even listen to the letter.

Lucien felt profoundly discouraged; he was damp with chilly perspiration; a glowing glance from Louise, to whom he turned, gave him courage to persevere to the end, but his poet's heart was bleeding from countless wounds.

"Do you find this very amusing, Fifine?" inquired the wizened Lili, who perhaps had expected some kind of gymnastics.

"Don't ask me what I think, dear; I cannot keep my eyes open when any one begins to read aloud."

"I hope that Naïs will not give us poetry often in the evenings," said Francis. "If I am obliged to attend while somebody reads aloud after dinner, it upsets my digestion."

"Poor dearie," whispered Zéphirine, "take a glass of *eau sucrée.*"

"It was very well declaimed," said Alexandre, "but I like whist better myself."

After this dictum, which passed muster as a joke from the play on the word "whist," several card-players were of the opinion that the reader's voice needed a rest, and on this pretext one or two couples slipped away into the card-room. But Louise, and the Bishop, and pretty Laure de Rastignac besought Lucien to continue, and this time he caught the attention of his audience with Chénier's spirited reactionary

Iambes. Several persons, carried away by his impassioned delivery, applauded the reading without understanding the sense. People of this sort are impressed by vociferation, as a coarse palate is tickled by strong spirits.

During an interval, as they partook of ices, Zéphirine despatched Francis to examine the volume, and informed her neighbor Amélie that the poetry was in print.

Amélie brightened visibly.

"Why, that is easily explained," said she. "M. de Rubempré works for a printer. It is as if a pretty woman should make her own dresses," she added, looking at Lolotte.

"He printed his poetry himself!" said the women among themselves.

"Then, why does he call himself M. de Rubempré?" inquired Jacques. "If a noble takes a handicraft, he ought to lay his name aside."

"So he did as a matter of fact," said Zizine, "but his name was plebeian, and he took his mother's name, which is noble."

"Well, if his verses are printed, we can read them for ourselves," said Astolphe.

This piece of stupidity complicated the question, until Sixte du Châtelet condescended to inform these unlettered folk that the prefatory announcement was no oratorical flourish, but a statement of fact, and added that the poems had been written by a Royalist brother of Marie-Joseph Chénier, the Revolutionary leader. All Angoulême, except Mme. de Rastignac and her two daughters and the Bishop, who had really felt the grandeur of the poetry, were mystified, and took offence at the hoax. There was a smothered murmur, but Lucien did not heed it. The intoxication of the poetry was upon him; he was far away from the hateful world, striving to render in speech the music that filled his soul, seeing the faces about him through a cloudy haze. He read the sombre Elegy on the Suicide, lines in the taste of a bygone day, pervaded by sublime melancholy; then he turned

to the page where the line occurs, "Thy songs are sweet, I love to say them over," and ended with the delicate idyll *Néère.*

Mme. de Bargeton sat with one hand buried in her curls, heedless of the havoc she wrought among them, gazing before her with unseeing eyes, alone in her drawing-room, lost in delicious dreaming; for the first time in her life she had been transported to the sphere which was hers by right of nature. Judge, therefore, how unpleasantly she was disturbed by Amélie, who took it upon herself to express the general wish.

"Naïs," this voice broke in, "we came to hear M. Chardon's poetry, and you are giving us poetry out of a book. The extracts are very nice, but the ladies feel a patriotic preference for the wine of the country; they would rather have it."

"The French language does not lend itself very readily to poetry, does it?" Astolphe remarked to Châtelet. "Cicero's prose is a thousand times more poetical to my way of thinking."

"The true poetry of France is song, lyric verse," Châtelet answered.

"Which proves that our language is eminently adapted for music," said Adrien.

"I should very much like to hear the poetry that has cost Naïs her reputation," said Zéphirine; "but after receiving Amélie's request in such a way, it is not very likely that she will give us a specimen."

"She ought to have them recited in justice to herself," said Francis. "The little fellow's genius is his sole justification."

"You have been in the diplomatic service," said Amélie to M. du Châtelet, "go and manage it somehow."

"Nothing easier," said the Baron.

The Princess' private secretary, being accustomed to petty manœuvres of this kind, went to the Bishop and contrived to bring him to the fore. At the Bishop's entreaty, Naïs had no choice but to ask Lucien to recite his own verses for them,

and the Baron received a languishing smile from Amélie as the reward of his prompt success.

"Decidedly, the Baron is a very clever man," she observed to Lolotte.

But Amélie's previous acidulous remark about women who made their own dresses rankled in Lolotte's mind.

"Since when have you begun to recognize the Emperor's barons?" she asked, smiling.

Lucien had essayed to deify his beloved in an ode, dedicated to her under a title in favor with all lads who write verse after leaving school. This ode, so fondly cherished, so beautiful—since it was the outpouring of all the love in his heart, seemed to him to be the one piece of his own work that could hold its own with Chénier's verse; and with a tolerably fatuous glance at Mme. de Bargeton, he announced "To Her!" He struck an attitude proudly for the delivery of the ambitious piece, for his author's self-love felt safe and at ease behind Mme. de Bargeton's petticoat. And at the selfsame moment Mme. de Bargeton betrayed her own secret to the women's curious eyes. Although she had always looked down upon this audience from her own loftier intellectual heights, she could not help trembling for Lucien. Her face was troubled, there was a sort of mute appeal for indulgence in her glances, and while the verses were recited she was obliged to lower her eyes and dissemble her pleasure as stanza followed stanza.

TO HER.

Out of the glowing heart of the torrent of glory and light,
At the foot of Jehovah's throne where the angels stand afar,
Each on a seistron of gold repeating the prayers of the night,
Put up for each by his star.

Out from the cherubim choir a bright-haired Angel springs,
Veiling the glory of God that dwells on a dazzling brow,
Leaving the courts of heaven to sink upon silver wings
Down to our world below.

God looked in pity on earth, and the Angel, reading His thought,
Came down to lull the pain of the mighty spirit at strife,
Reverent bent o'er the maid, and for age left desolate brought
Flowers of the springtime of life.

Bringing a dream of hope to solace the mother's fears,
Hearkening unto the voice of the tardy repentant cry,
Glad as angels are glad, to reckon Earth's pitying tears,
Given with alms of a sigh.

One there is, and but one, bright messenger sent from the skies
Whom earth like a lover fain would hold from the heav'nward flight;
But the angel, weeping, turns and gazes with sad, sweet eyes
Up to the heaven of light.

Not by the radiant eyes, not by the kindling glow
Of virtue sent from God, did I know the secret sign,
Nor read the token set on a white and dazzling brow
Of an origin divine.

Nay, it was Love grown blind and dazed with excess of light,
Striving and striving in vain to mingle Earth and Heaven,
Helpless and powerless against the invincible armor bright
By the dread archangel given.

Ah! be wary, take heed, lest aught should be seen or heard
Of the shining seraph band, as they take the heavenward way;
Too soon the Angel on Earth will learn the magical word
Sung at the close of the day.

Then you shall see afar, rifting the darkness of night,
A gleam as of dawn that spread across the starry floor,
And the seamen that watch for a sign shall mark the track of their flight,
A luminous pathway in Heaven and a beacon for evermore.

"Do you read the riddle?" said Amélie, giving M. du Châtelet a coquettish glance.

"It is the sort of stuff that we all of us wrote more or less after we left school," said the Baron with a bored expression—he was acting his part of arbiter of taste who has seen every-

thing. "We used to deal in Ossianic mists, Malvinas and Fingals and cloudy shapes, and warriors who got out of their tombs with stars above their heads. Nowadays this poetical frippery has been replaced by Jehovah, angels, seistrons, the plumes of seraphim, and all the paraphernalia of paradise freshened up with a few new words such as 'immense, infinite, solitude, intelligence'; you have lakes, and the words of the Almighty, a kind of Christianized Pantheism, enriched with the most extraordinary and unheard-of rhymes. We are in quite another latitude, in fact; we have left the North for the East, but the darkness is just as thick as before."

"If the ode is obscure, the declaration is very clear, it seems to me," said Zéphirine.

"And the archangel's armor is a tolerably thin gauze robe," said Francis.

Politeness demanded that the audience should profess to be enchanted with the poem; and the women, furious because they had no poets in their train to extol them as angels, rose, looked bored by the reading, murmuring, "Very nice!" "Charming!" "Perfect!" with frigid coldness.

"If you love me, do not congratulate the poet or his angel," Lolotte laid her commands on her dear Adrien in imperious tones; and Adrien was fain to obey.

"Empty words, after all," Zéphirine remarked to Francis, "and love is a poem that we live."

"You have just expressed the very thing that I was thinking, Zizine, but I should not have put it so neatly," said Stanislas, scanning himself from top to toe with loving attention.

"I would give, I don't know how much, to see Naïs' pride brought down a bit," said Amélie, addressing Châtelet. "Naïs sets up to be an archangel, as if she were better than the rest of us, and mixes us up with low people; his father was an apothecary, and his mother is a nurse; his sister works in a laundry, and he himself is a printer's foreman."

"If his father sold biscuits for worms" (*vers*), said Jacques, "he ought to have made his son take them."

"He is continuing in his father's line of business, for the stuff that he has just been reading to us is a drug in the market, it seems," said Stanislas, striking one of his most killing attitudes. "Drug for drug, I would rather have something else."

Every one apparently combined to humiliate Lucien by various aristocrats' sarcasms. Lili the religious thought it a charitable deed to use any means of enlightening Naïs, and Naïs was on the brink of a piece of folly. Francis the diplomatist undertook the direction of the silly conspiracy; every one was interested in the progress of the drama; it would be something to talk about to-morrow. The ex-consul, being far from anxious to engage in a duel with a young poet who would fly into a rage at the first hint of insult under his lady's eyes, was wise enough to see that the only way of dealing Lucien his deathblow was by the spiritual arm which was safe from vengeance. He therefore followed the example set by Châtelet the astute, and went to the Bishop. Him he proceeded to mystify.

He told the Bishop that Lucien's mother was a woman of uncommon powers and great modesty, and that it was she who found the subjects for her son's verses. Nothing pleased Lucien so much, according to the guileful Francis, as any recognition of her talents—he worshiped his mother. Then, having inculcated these notions, he left the rest to time. His lordship was sure to bring out the insulting allusion, for which he had been so carefully prepared, in the course of conversation.

When Francis and the Bishop joined the little group where Lucien stood, the circle who gave him the cup of hemlock to drain by little sips watched him with redoubled interest. The poet, luckless young man, being a total stranger, and unaware of the manners and customs of the house, could only look at Mme. de Bargeton and give embarrassed answers to embarrassing questions. He knew neither the names nor condition of the people about him; the women's silly speeches made him blush for them, and he was at his

wits' end for a reply. He felt, moreover, how very far removed he was from these divinities of Angoulême when he heard himself addressed sometimes as M. Chardon, sometimes as M. de Rubempré, while they all addressed each other as Lolotte, Adrien, Astolphe, Lili, and Fifine. His confusion rose to a height when, taking Lili for a man's surname, he addressed the coarse M. de Senonches as M. Lili; that Nimrod broke in upon him with a *"Monsieur Lulu?"* and Mme. de Bargeton flushed red to the eyes.

"A woman must be blind indeed to bring this little fellow among us!" muttered Senonches.

Zéphirine turned to speak to the Marquise de Pimentel—"Do you not see a strong likeness between M. Chardon and M. de Cante-Croix, madame?" she asked in a low but quite audible voice.

"The likeness is ideal," smiled Mme. de Pimentel.

"Glory has a power of attraction to which we can confess," said Mme. de Bargeton, addressing the Marquise. "Some women are as much attracted by greatness as others by littleness," she added, looking at Francis.

This was beyond Zéphirine's comprehension; she thought her consul a very great man; but the Marquise laughed, and her laughter ranged her on Naïs' side.

"You are very fortunate, monsieur," said the Marquis de Pimentel, addressing Lucien for the purpose of calling him M. de Rubempré, and not M. Chardon, as before; "you should never find time heavy on your hands."

"Do you work quickly?" asked Lolotte, much in the way that she would have asked a joiner "if it took long to make a box."

The bludgeon stroke stunned Lucien, but he raised his head at Mme. de Bargeton's reply—

"My dear, poetry does not grow in M. de Rubempré's head like grass in our courtyards."

"Madame, we cannot feel too reverently towards the noble spirits in whom God has set some ray of this light," said the Bishop, addressing Lolotte. "Yes, poetry is something holy.

Poetry implies suffering. How many silent nights those verses that you admire have cost! We should bow in love and reverence before the poet; his life here is almost always a life of sorrow; but God doubtless reserves a place in heaven for him among His prophets. This young man is a poet," he added, laying a hand on Lucien's head; "do you not see the sign of Fate set on that high forehead of his?"

Glad to be so generously championed, Lucien made his acknowledgments in a grateful look, not knowing that the worthy prelate was to deal his deathblow.

Mme. de Bargeton's eyes traveled round the hostile circle. Her glances went like arrows to the depths of her rivals' hearts, and left them twice as furious as before.

"Ah, monseigneur," cried Lucien, hoping to break thick heads with his golden sceptre, "but ordinary people have neither your intellect nor your charity. No one heeds our sorrows, our toil is unrecognized. The gold-digger working in the mine does not labor as we to wrest metaphors from the heart of the most ungrateful of all languages. If this is poetry—to give ideas such definite and clear expressions that all the world can see and understand—the poet must continually range through the entire scale of human intellects, so that he can satisfy the demands of all; he must conceal hard thinking and emotion, two antagonistic powers, beneath the most vivid color; he must know how to make one word cover a whole world of thought; he must give the results of whole systems of philosophy in a few picturesque lines; indeed, his songs are like seeds that must break into blossom in other hearts wherever they find the soil prepared by personal experience. How can you express unless you first have felt? And is not passion suffering? Poetry is only brought forth after painful wanderings in the vast regions of thought and life. There are men and women in books, who seem more really alive to us than men and women who have lived and died —Richardson's Clarissa, Chénier's Camille, the Delia of Tibullus, Ariosto's Angelica, Dante's Francesca, Molière's Alceste, Beaumarchais' Figaro, Scott's Rebecca the Jewess,

the Don Quixote of Cervantes,—do we not owe these deathless creations to immortal throes?"

"And what are you going to create for us?" asked Châtelet.

"If I were to announce such conceptions, I should give myself out for a man of genius, should I not?" answered Lucien. "And besides, such sublime creations demand a long experience of the world and a study of human passion and interests which I could not possibly have made; but I have made a beginning," he added, with bitterness in his tone, as he took a vengeful glance round the circle; "the time of gestation is long——"

"Then it will be a case of difficult labor," interrupted M. du Hautoy.

"Your excellent mother might assist you," suggested the Bishop.

The epigram, innocently made by the good prelate, the long-looked-for revenge, kindled a gleam of delight in all eyes. The smile of satisfied cast that traveled from mouth to mouth was aggravated by M. de Bargeton's imbecility; he burst into a laugh, as usual, some moments later.

"Monseigneur, you are talking a little above our heads; these ladies do not understand your meaning," said Mme. de Bargeton, and the words paralyzed the laughter, and drew astonished eyes upon her. "A poet who looks to the Bible for his inspiration has a mother indeed in the Church.—M. de Rubempré, will you recite *Saint John in Patmos* for us, or *Belshazzar's Feast*, so that his lordship may see that Rome is still the *Magna Parens* of Virgil?"

The women exchanged smiles at the Latin words.

The bravest and highest spirits know times of prostration at the outset of life. Lucien had sunk to the depths at the blow, but he struck the bottom with his feet, and rose to the surface again, vowing to subjugate this little world. He rose like a bull, stung to fury by a shower of darts, and prepared to obey Louise by declaiming *Saint John in Patmos;* but by this time the card-tables had claimed their complement of players, who returned to the accustomed groove to find

amusement there which poetry had not afforded them. They felt besides that the revenge of so many outraged vanities would be incomplete unless it were followed up by contemptuous indifference; so they showed their tacit disdain for the native product by leaving Lucien and Mme. de Bargeton to themselves. Every one appeared to be absorbed in his own affairs; one chattered with the prefect about a new cross-road, another proposed to vary the pleasures of the evening with a little music. The great world of Angoulême, feeling that it was no judge of poetry, was very anxious, in the first place, to hear the verdict of the Pimentels and the Rastignacs, and formed a little group about them. The great influence wielded in the department by these two families was always felt on every important occasion; every one was jealous of them, every one paid court to them, foreseeing that they might some day need that influence.

"What do you think of our poet and his poetry?" Jacques asked of the Marquise. Jacques used to shoot over the lands belonging to the Pimentel family.

"Why, it is not bad for provincial poetry," she said, smiling; "and besides, such a beautiful poet cannot do anything amiss."

Every one thought the decision admirable; it traveled from lip to lip, gaining malignance by the way. Then Châtelet was called upon to accompany M. du Bartas on the piano while he mangled the great solo from *Figaro;* and the way being opened to music, the audience, as in duty bound, listened while Châtelet in turn sang one of Chateaubriand's ballads, a chivalrous ditty made in the time of the Empire. Duets followed, of the kind usually left to boarding-school misses, and rescued from the schoolroom by Mme. du Brossard, who meant to make a brilliant display of her dear Camille's talents for M. de Séverac's benefit.

Mme. de Bargeton, hurt by the contempt which every one showed her poet, paid back scorn for scorn by going to her boudoir during these performances. She was followed by the prelate. His Vicar-General had just been explaining the pro-

found irony of the epigram into which he had been entrapped, and the Bishop wished to make amends. Mlle. de Rastignac, fascinated by the poetry, also slipped into the boudoir without her mother's knowledge.

Louise drew Lucien to her mattress-cushioned sofa; and with no one to see or hear, she murmured in his ear, "Dear angel, they did not understand you; but, 'Thy songs are sweet, I love to say them over.' "

And Lucien took comfort from the pretty speech, and forgot his woes for a little.

"Glory is not to be had cheaply," Mme. de Bargeton continued, taking his hand and holding it tightly in her own. "Endure your woes, my friend, you will be great one day; your pain is the price of your immortality. If only I had a hard struggle before me! God preserve you from the enervating life without battles, in which the eagle's wings have no room to spread themselves. I envy you; for if you suffer, at least you live. You will put out your strength, you will feel the hope of victory; your strife will be glorious. And when you shall come to your kingdom, and reach the imperial sphere where great minds are enthroned, then remember the poor creatures disinherited by fate, whose intellects pine in an oppressive moral atmosphere, who die and have never lived, knowing all the while what life might be; think of the piercing eyes that have seen nothing, the delicate senses that have only known the scent of poison flowers. Then tell in your song of plants that wither in the depths of the forest, choked by twining growths and rank, greedy vegetation, plants that never have been kissed by the sunlight, and die, never having put forth a blossom. It would be a terribly gloomy poem, would it not, a fanciful subject? What a sublime poem might be made of the story of some daughter of the desert transported to some cold, western clime, calling for her beloved sun, dying of a grief that none can understand, overcome with cold and longing. It would be an allegory; many lives are like that."

"You would picture the spirit which remembers Heaven,"

said the Bishop; "some one surely must have written such a poem in the days of old; I like to think that I see a fragment of it in the Song of Songs."

"Take that as your subject," said Laure de Rastignac, expressing her artless belief in Lucien's powers.

"The great sacred poem of France is still unwritten," remarked the Bishop. "Believe me, glory and success await the man of talent who shall work for religion."

"That task will be his," said Mme. de Bargeton rhetorically. "Do you not see the first beginnings of the vision of the poem, like the flame of dawn, in his eyes?"

"Naïs is treating us very badly," said Fifine; "what can she be doing?"

"Don't you hear?" said Stanislas. "She is flourishing away, using big words that you cannot make head or tail of."

Amélie, Fifine, Adrien, and Francis appeared in the doorway with Mme. de Rastignac, who came to look for her daughter.

"Naïs," cried the two ladies, both delighted to break in upon the quiet chat in the boudoir, "it would be very nice of you to come and play something for us."

"My dear child, M. de Rubempré is just about to recite his *Saint John in Patmos,* a magnificent biblical poem."

"Biblical!" echoed Fifine in amazement.

Amélie and Fifine went back to the drawing-room, taking the word back with them as food for laughter. Lucien pleaded a defective memory and excused himself. When he reappeared, nobody took the slightest notice of him; every one was chatting or busy at the card-tables; the poet's aureole had been plucked away, the landowners had no use for him, the more pretentious sort looked upon him as an enemy to their ignorance, while the women were jealous of Mme. de Bargeton, the Beatrice of this modern Dante, to use the Vicar-General's phrase, and looked at him with cold, scornful eyes.

"So this is society!" Lucien said to himself as he went down to L'Houmeau by the steps of Beaulieu; for there are times

when we choose to take the longest way, that the physical exercise of walking may promote the flow of ideas.

So far from being disheartened, the fury of repulsed ambition gave Lucien new strength. Like all those whose instincts bring them to a higher social sphere which they reach before they can hold their own in it, Lucien vowed to make any sacrifice to the end that he might remain on that higher social level. One by one he drew out the poisoned shafts on his way home, talking aloud to himself, scoffing at the fools with whom he had to do, inventing neat answers to their idiotic questions, desperately vexed that the witty responses occurred to him so late in the day. By the time that he reached the Bordeaux road, between the river and the foot of the hill, he thought that he could see Eve and David sitting on a baulk of timber by the river in the moonlight, and went down the footpath towards them.

While Lucien was hastening to the torture in Mme. de Bargeton's rooms, his sister had changed her dress for a gown of pink cambric covered with narrow stripes, a straw hat, and a little silk shawl. The simple costume seemed like a rich toilette on Eve, for she was one of those women whose great nature lends stateliness to the least personal detail; and David felt prodigiously shy of her now that she had changed her working dress. He had made up his mind that he would speak of himself; but now as he gave his arm to this beautiful girl, and they walked through L'Houmeau together, he could find nothing to say to her. Love delights in such reverent awe as redeemed souls know on beholding the glory of God. So, in silence, the two lovers went across the Bridge of Saint Anne, and followed the left bank of the Charente. Eve felt embarrassed by the pause, and stopped to look along the river; a joyous shaft of sunset had turned the water between the bridge and the new powder mills into a sheet of gold.

"What a beautiful evening it is!" she said, for the sake of

saying something; "the air is warm and fresh, and full of the scent of flowers, and there is a wonderful sky."

"Everything speaks to our heart," said David, trying to proceed to love by way of analogy. "Those who love find infinite delight in discovering the poetry of their own inmost souls in every chance effect of the landscape, in the thin, clear air, in the scent of the earth. Nature speaks for them."

"And loosens their tongues, too," Eve said merrily. "You were very silent as we came through L'Houmeau. Do you know, I felt quite uncomfortable——"

"You looked so beautiful, that I could not say anything," David answered candidly.

"Then, just now I am not so beautiful?" inquired she.

"It is not that," he said; "but I was so happy to have this walk alone with you, that——" he stopped short in confusion, and looked at the hillside and the road to Saintes.

"If the walk is any pleasure to you, I am delighted; for I owe you an evening, I think, when you have given up yours for me. When you refused to go to Mme. de Bargeton's, you were quite as generous as Lucien when he made the demand at the risk of vexing her."

"No, not generous, only wise," said David. "And now that we are quite alone under the sky, with no listeners except the bushes and the reeds by the edge of the Charente, let me tell you about my anxiety as to Lucien's present step, dear Eve. After all that I have just said, I hope that you will look on my fears as a refinement of friendship. You and your mother have done all that you could to put him above his social position; but when you stimulated his ambition, did you not unthinkingly condemn him to a hard struggle? How can he maintain himself in the society to which his tastes incline him? I know Lucien; he likes to reap, he does not like toil; it is his nature. Social claims will take up the whole of his time, and for a man who has nothing but his brains, time is capital. He likes to shine; society will stimulate his desires until no money will satisfy them; instead of earning money, he will spend it. You have accustomed him to believe in his

great powers, in fact, but the world at large declines to believe in any man's superior intellect until he has achieved some signal success. Now success in literature is only won in solitude and by dogged work. What will Mme. de Bargeton give your brother in return for so many days spent at her feet? Lucien has too much spirit to accept help from her; and he cannot afford, as we know, to cultivate her society, twice ruinous as it is for him. Sooner or later that woman will throw over this dear brother of ours, but not before she has spoiled him for hard work, and given him a taste for luxury and a contempt for our humdrum life. She will develop his love of enjoyment, his inclination for idleness, that debauches a poetic soul. Yes, it makes me tremble to think that this great lady may make a plaything of Lucien. If she cares for him sincerely, he will forget everything else for her; or if she does not love him, she will make him unhappy, for he is wild about her."

"You have sent a chill of dread through my heart," said Eve, stopping as they reached the weir. "But so long as mother is strong enough for her tiring life, so long as I live, we shall earn enough, perhaps, between us to keep Lucien until success comes. My courage will never fail," said Eve, brightening. "There is no hardship in work when we work for one we love; it is not drudgery. It makes me happy to think that I toil so much, if indeed it is toil, for him. Oh, do not be in the least afraid, we will earn money enough to send Lucien into the great world. There lies his road to success."

"And there lies his road to ruin," returned David. "Dear Eve, listen to me. A man needs an independent fortune, or the sublime cynicism of poverty, for the slow execution of great work. Believe me, Lucien's horror of privation is so great, the savor of banquets, the incense of success is so sweet in his nostrils, his self-love has grown so much in Mme. de Bargeton's boudoir, that he will do anything desperate sooner than fall back, and you will never earn enough for his requirements."

"Then you are only a false friend to him!" Eve cried in despair, "or you would not discourage us in this way."

"Eve! Eve!" cried David, "if only I could be a brother to Lucien! You alone can give me that title; he could accept anything from me then; I should claim the right of devoting my life to him with the love that hallows your self-sacrifice, but with some worldly wisdom too. Eve, my darling, give Lucien a store from which he need not blush to draw! His brother's purse will be like his own, will it not? If you only knew all my thoughts about Lucien's position! If he means to go to Mme. de Bargeton's, he must not be my foreman any longer, poor fellow! He ought not to live in L'Houmeau; you ought not to be a working girl; and your mother must give up her employment as well. If you will consent to be my wife, the difficulties will all be smoothed away. Lucien might live on the second floor in the Place du Mûrier until I can build rooms for him over the shed at the back of the yard (if my father will allow it, that is). And in that way we would arrange a free and independent life for him. The wish to support Lucien will give me a better will to work than I ever should have had for myself alone; but it rests with you to give me the right to devote myself to him. Some day, perhaps, he will go to Paris, the only place that can bring out all that is in him, and where his talents will be appreciated and rewarded. Living in Paris is expensive, and the earnings of all three of us will be needed for his support. And besides, will not you and your mother need some one to lean upon then? Dear Eve, marry me for love of Lucien; perhaps afterwards you will love me when you will see how I shall strive to help him and to make you happy. We are, both of us, equally simple in our tastes; we have few wants; Lucien's welfare shall be the great object of our lives. His heart shall be our treasure-house, we will lay up all our fortune, and think and feel and hope in him."

"Worldly considerations keep us apart," said Eve, moved by this love that tried to explain away its greatness. "You are

rich and I am poor. One must love indeed to overcome such a difficulty."

"Then you do not care enough for me?" cried the stricken David.

"But perhaps your father would object——"

"Never mind," said David; "if asking my father is all that is necessary, you will be my wife. Eve, my dear Eve, how you have lightened life for me in a moment; and my heart has been very heavy with thoughts that I could not utter, I did not know how to speak of them. Only tell me that you care for me a little, and I will take courage to tell you the rest."

"Indeed," she said, "you make me quite ashamed; but confidence for confidence, I will tell you this, that I have never thought of any one but you in my life. I looked upon you as one of those men to whom a woman might be proud to belong, and I did not dare to hope so great a thing for myself, a penniless working girl with no prospects."

"That is enough, that is enough," he answered, sitting down on the bar by the weir, for they had gone to and fro like mad creatures over the same length of pathway.

"What is the matter?" she asked, her voice expressing for the first time a woman's sweet anxiety for one who belongs to her.

"Nothing but good," he answered. "It is the sight of a whole lifetime of happiness that dazzles me, as it were; it is overwhelming. Why am I happier than you?" he asked, with a touch of sadness. "For I know that I am happier."

Eve looked at David with mischievous, doubtful eyes that asked an explanation.

"Dear Eve, I am taking more than I give. So I shall always love you more than you love me, because I have more reason to love. You are an angel; I am a man."

"I am not so learned," Eve said, smiling. "I love you——"

"As much as you love Lucien?" he broke in.

"Enough to be your wife, enough to devote myself to you, to try not to add anything to your burdens, for we shall have some struggles; it will not be quite easy at first."

"Dear Eve, have you known that I loved you since the first day I saw you?"

"Where is the woman who does not feel that she is loved?"

"Now let me get rid of your scruples as to my imaginary riches. I am a poor man, dear. Yes, it pleased my father to ruin me; he made a speculation of me, as a good many so-called benefactors do. If I make a fortune, it will be entirely through you. That is not a lover's speech, but sober, serious earnest. I ought to tell you about my faults, for they are exceedingly bad ones in a man who has his way to make. My character and habits and favorite occupations all unfit me for business and money-getting, and yet we can only make money by some kind of industry; if I have some faculty for the discovery of gold-mines, I am singularly ill-adapted for getting the gold out of them. But you who, for your brother's sake, went into the smallest details, with a talent for thrift, and the patient watchfulness of the born man of business, you will reap the harvest that I shall sow. The present state of things, for I have been like one of the family for a long time, weighs so heavily upon me, that I have spent days and nights in search of some way of making a fortune. I know something of chemistry, and a knowledge of commercial requirements has put me on the scent of a discovery that is likely to pay. I can say nothing as yet about it; there will be a long while to wait; perhaps for some years we may have a hard time of it; but I shall find out how to make a commercial article at last. Others are busy making the same researches, and if I am first in the field, we shall have a large fortune. I have said nothing to Lucien, his enthusiastic nature would spoil everything; he would convert my hopes into realities, and begin to live like a lord, and perhaps get into debt. So keep my secret for me. Your sweet and dear companionship will be consolation in itself during the long time of experiment, and the desire to gain wealth for you and Lucien will give me persistence and tenacity——"

"I had guessed this too," Eve said, interrupting him; "I

knew that you were one of those inventors, like my poor father, who must have a woman to take care of them."

"Then you love me! Ah! say so without fear to me, who saw a symbol of my love for you in your name. Eve was the one woman in the world; if it was true in the outward world for Adam, it is true again in the inner world of my heart for me. My God! do you love me?"

"Yes," said she, lengthening out the word as if to make it cover the extent of feeling expressed by a single syllable.

"Well, let us sit here," he said, and taking Eve's hand, he went to a great baulk of timber lying below the wheels of a paper-mill. "Let me breathe the evening air, and hear the frogs croak, and watch the moonlight quivering upon the river; let me take all this world about us into my soul, for it seems to me that my happiness is written large over it all; I am seeing it for the first time in all its splendor, lighted up by love, grown fair through you. Eve, dearest, this is the first moment of pure and unmixed joy that fate has given to me! I do not think that Lucien can be as happy as I am."

David felt Eve's hand, damp and quivering in his own, and a tear fell upon it.

"May I not know the secret?" she pleaded coaxingly.

"You have a right to know it, for your father was interested in the matter, and to-day it is a pressing question, and for this reason. Since the downfall of the Empire, calico has come more and more into use, because it is so much cheaper than linen. At the present moment, paper is made of a mixture of hemp and linen rags, but the raw material is dear, and the expense naturally retards the great advance which the French press is bound to make. Now you cannot increase the output of linen rags, a given population gives a pretty constant result, and it only increases with the birth-rate. To make any perceptible difference in the population for this purpose, it would take a quarter of a century and a great revolution in habits of life, trade, and agriculture. And if the supply of linen rags is not enough to meet one-half nor one-third of the demand, some cheaper material than linen rags

must be found for cheap paper. This deduction is based on facts that came under my knowledge here. The Angoulême paper-makers, the last to use pure linen rags, say that the proportion of cotton in the pulp has increased to a frightful extent of late years."

In answer to a question from Eve, who did not know what "pulp" meant, David gave an account of paper-making, which will not be out of place in a volume which owes its existence in book form to the paper industry no less than to the printing-press; but the long digression, doubtless, had best be condensed at the first.

Paper, an invention not less marvelous than the other dependent invention of printing, was known in ancient times in China. Thence by the unrecognized channels of commerce the art reached Asia Minor, where paper was made in the year 750, according to tradition, a paper made of cotton reduced to a pulp and boiled. Parchment had become so extremely dear that a cheap substitute was discovered in an imitation of the cotton paper known in the East as *charta bombycina.* The imitation, made from rags, was first made at Basel, in 1170, by a colony of Greek refugees, according to some authorities; or at Padua, in 1301, by an Italian named Pax, according to others. In these ways the manufacture of paper was perfected slowly and in obscurity; but this much is certain, that so early as the reign of Charles VI., paper pulp for playing-cards was made in Paris.

When those immortals, Faust, Coster, and Gutenberg, invented the Book, craftsmen as obscure as many a great artist of those times appropriated paper to the uses of typography. In the fifteenth century, that naïve and vigorous age, names were given to the various formats as well as to the different sizes of type, names that bear the impress of the naïveté of the times; and the various sheets came to be known by the different watermarks on their centres; the grapes, the figure of our Saviour, the crown, the shield, or the flower-pot, just as, at a later day, the eagle of Napoleon's time gave the name to the "double-eagle" size. And in the same way the types

were called Cicero, Saint-Augustine, and Canon type, because they were first used to print the treatises of Cicero and theological and liturgical works. Italics are so called because they were invented in Italy by Aldus of Venice.

Before the invention of machine-made paper, which can be woven in any length, the largest sized sheets were the *grand jésus* and the double columbier (this last being scarcely used now except for atlases or engravings), and the size of paper for printers' use was determined by the dimensions of the impression-stone. When David explained these things to Eve, web-paper was almost undreamed of in France, although, about 1799, Denis Robert d'Essonne had invented a machine for turning out a ribbon of paper, and Didot-Saint-Léger had since tried to perfect it. The vellum paper invented by Ambroise Didot only dates back as far as 1780.

This bird's-eye view of the history of the invention shows incontestably that great industrial and intellectual advances are made exceedingly slowly, and little by little, even as Nature herself proceeds. Perhaps articulate speech and the art of writing were gradually developed in the same groping way as typography and paper-making.

"Rag-pickers collect all the rags and old linen of Europe," the printer concluded, "and buy any kind of tissue. The rags are sorted and warehoused by the wholesale rag merchants, who supply the paper-mills. To give you some idea of the extent of the trade, you must know, mademoiselle, that in 1814 Cardon the banker, owner of the pulping troughs of Bruges and Langlée (where Léorier de l'Isle endeavored in 1776 to solve the very problem that occupied your father), Cardon brought an action against one Proust for an error in weights of two millions in a total of ten million pounds' weight of rags, worth about four million francs! The manufacturer washes the rags and reduces them to a thin pulp, which is strained, exactly as a cook strains sauce through a tamis, through an iron frame with a fine wire bottom where the mark which gives its name to the size of the paper is

woven. The size of this *mould,* as it is called, regulates the size of the sheet.

"When I was with the Messieurs Didot," David continued, "they were very much interested in this question, and they are still interested; for the improvement which your father endeavored to make is a great commercial requirement, and one of the crying needs of the time. And for this reason: although linen lasts so much longer than cotton, that it is in reality cheaper in the end, the poor would rather make the smaller outlay in the first instance, and, by virtue of the law of *Vae victis!* pay enormously more before they have done. The middle classes do the same. So there is a scarcity of linen. In England, where four-fifths of the population use cotton to the exclusion of linen, they make nothing but cotton paper. The cotton paper is very soft and easily creased to begin with, and it has a further defect: it is so soluble that if you steep a book made of cotton paper in water for fifteen minutes, it turns to a pulp, while an old book left in water for a couple of hours is not spoilt. You could dry the old book, and the pages, though yellow and faded, would still be legible, the work would not be destroyed.

"There is a time coming when legislation will equalize our fortunes, and we shall all be poor together; we shall want our linen and our books to be cheap, just as people are beginning to prefer small pictures because they have not wall space enough for large ones. Well, the shirts and the books will not last, that is all; it is the same on all sides, solidity is dying out. So this problem is one of the first importance for literature, science, and politics.

"One day, in my office, there was a hot discussion going on about the material that the Chinese use for making paper. Their paper is far better than ours, because the raw material is better; and a good deal was said about this thin, light Chinese paper, for if it is light and thin, the texture is close, there are no transparent spots in it. In Paris there are learned men among the printers' readers; Fourier and Pierre Leroux are Lachevardière's readers at this moment; and the

Comte de Saint-Simon, who happened to be correcting proofs for us, came in in the middle of the discussion. He told us at once that, according to Kempfer and du Halde, the *Broussonetia* furnishes the substance of the Chinese paper; it is a vegetable substance (like linen or cotton for that matter). Another reader maintained that Chinese paper was principally made of an animal substance, to wit, the silk that is abundant there. They made a bet about it in my presence. The Messieurs Didot are printers to the Institute, so naturally they referred the question to that learned body. M. Marcel, who used to be superintendent of the Royal Printing Establishment, was umpire, and he sent the two readers to M. l'Abbé Grozier, Librarian at the Arsenal. By the Abbé's decision they lost both their wagers. The paper was not made of silk nor yet from the *Broussonetia;* the pulp proved to be the triturated fibre of some kind of bamboo. The Abbé Grozier had a Chinese book, an iconographical and technological work, with a great many pictures in it, illustrating all the different processes of paper-making, and he showed us a picture of the workshop with the bamboo stalks lying in a heap in the corner; it was extremely well drawn.

"Lucien told me that your father, with the intuition of a man of talent, had a glimmering of a notion of some way of replacing linen rags with an exceedingly common vegetable product, not previously manufactured, but taken direct from the soil, as the Chinese use vegetable fibre at first hand. I have classified the guesses made by those who came before me, and have begun to study the question. The bamboo is a kind of reed; naturally I began to think of the reeds that grow here in France.

"Labor is very cheap in China, where a workman earns three halfpence a day, and this cheapness of labor enables the Chinese to manipulate each sheet of paper separately. They take it out of the mould, and press it between heated tablets of white porcelain, that is the secret of the surface and consistence, the lightness and satin smoothness of the best paper in the world. Well, here in Europe the work must

be done by machinery; machinery must take the place of cheap Chinese labor. If we could but succeed in making a cheap paper of as good a quality, the weight and thickness of printed books would be reduced by more than one-half. A set of Voltaire, printed on our woven paper and bound, weighs about two hundred and fifty pounds; it would only weigh fifty if we used Chinese paper. That surely would be a triumph, for the housing of many books has come to be a difficulty; everything has grown smaller of late; this is not an age of giants; men have shrunk, everything about them shrinks, and house-room into the bargain. Great mansions and great suites of rooms will be abolished sooner or later in Paris, for no one will afford to live in the great houses built by our forefathers. What a disgrace for our age if none of its books should last! Dutch paper—that is, paper made from flax—will be quite unobtainable in ten years' time. Well, your brother told me of this idea of your father's, this plan for using vegetable fibre in paper-making, so you see that if I succeed, you have a right to——"

Lucien came up at that moment and interrupted David's generous assertion.

"I do not know whether you have found the evening pleasant," said he; "it has been a cruel time for me."

"Poor Lucien! what can have happened?" cried Eve, as she saw her brother's excited face.

The poet told the history of his agony, pouring out a flood of clamorous thoughts into those friendly hearts, Eve and David listening in pained silence to a torrent of woes that exhibited such greatness and such pettiness.

"M. de Bargeton is an old dotard. The indigestion will carry him off before long, no doubt," Lucien said, as he made an end, "and then I will look down on these proud people; I will marry Mme. de Bargeton. I read to-night in her eyes a love as great as mine for her. Yes, she felt all that I felt; she comforted me; she is as great and noble as she is gracious and beautiful. She will never give me up."

"It is time that life was made smooth for him, is it not?"

murmured David, and for answer Eve pressed his arm without speaking. David guessed her thoughts, and began at once to tell Lucien about his own plans.

If Lucien was full of his troubles, the lovers were quite as full of themselves. So absorbed were they, so eager that Lucien should approve their happiness, that neither Eve nor David so much as noticed his start of surprise at the news. Mme. de Bargeton's lover had been dreaming of a great match for his sister; he would reach a high position first, and then secure himself by an alliance with some family of influence, and here was one more obstacle in his way to success! His hopes were dashed to the ground. "If Mme. de Bargeton consents to be Mme. de Rubempré, she would never care to have David Séchard for a brother-in-law!"

This stated clearly and precisely was the thought that tortured Lucien's inmost mind. "Louise is right!" he thought bitterly. "A man with a career before him is never understood by his family."

If the marriage had not been announced immediately after Lucien's fancy had put M. de Bargeton to death, he would have been radiant with heartfelt delight at the news. If he had thought soberly over the probable future of a beautiful and penniless girl like Eve Chardon, he would have seen that this marriage was a piece of unhoped-for good fortune. But he was living just now in a golden dream; he had soared above all barriers on the wings of an *if;* he had seen a vision of himself, rising above society; and it was painful to drop so suddenly down to hard fact.

Eve and David both thought that their brother was overcome with the sense of such generosity; to them, with their noble natures, the silent consent was a sign of true friendship. David began to describe with kindly and cordial eloquence the happy fortunes in store for them all. Unchecked by protests put in by Eve, he furnished his first floor with a lover's lavishness, built a second floor with boyish good faith for Lucien, and rooms above the shed for Mme. Chardon—he meant to be a son to her. In short, he made the whole family

so happy and his brother-in-law so independent, that Lucien fell under the spell of David's voice and Eve's caresses; and as they went through the shadows beside the still Charente, a gleam in the warm, star-lit night, he forgot the sharp crown of thorns that had been pressed upon his head. "M. de Rubempré" discovered David's real nature, in fact. His facile character returned almost at once to the innocent, hard-working burgher life that he knew; he saw it transfigured and free from care. The buzz of the aristocratic world grew more and more remote; and when at length they came upon the paved road of L'Houmeau, the ambitious poet grasped his brother's hand, and made a third in the joy of the happy lovers.

"If only your father makes no objection to the marriage," he said.

"You know how much he troubles himself about me; the old man lives for himself," said David. "But I will go over to Marsac to-morrow and see him, if it is only to ask leave to build."

David went back to the house with the brother and sister, and asked Mme. Chardon's consent to his marriage with the eagerness of a man who would fain have no delay. Eve's mother took her daughter's hand, and gladly laid it in David's; and the lover, grown bolder on this, kissed his fair betrothed on the forehead, and she flushed red, and smiled at him.

"The betrothal of the poor," the mother said, raising her eyes as if to pray for heaven's blessing upon them.—"You are brave, my boy," she added, looking at David, "but we have fallen on evil fortune, and I am afraid lest our bad luck should be infectious."

"We shall be rich and happy," David said earnestly. "To begin with, you must not go out nursing any more, and you must come and live with your daughter and Lucien in Angoulême."

The three began at once to tell the astonished mother all their charming plans, and the family party gave themselves

up to the pleasure of chatting and weaving a romance, in which it is so pleasant to enjoy future happiness, and to store the unsown harvest. They had to put David out at the door; he could have wished the evening to last for ever, and it was one o'clock in the morning when Lucien and his future brother-in-law reached the Palet Gate. The unwonted movement made honest Postel uneasy; he opened the window, and looking through the Venetian shutters, he saw a light in Eve's room.

"What can be happening at the Chardons'?" thought he, and seeing Lucien come in, he called out to him—

"What is the matter, sonny? Do you want me to do anything?"

"No, sir," returned the poet; "but as you are our friend, I can tell you about it; my mother has just given her consent to my sister's engagement to David Séchard."

For all answer, Postel shut the window with a bang, in despair that he had not asked for Mlle. Chardon earlier.

David, however, did not go back into Angoulême; he took the road to Marsac instead, and walked through the night the whole way to his father's house. He went along by the side of the croft just as the sun rose, and caught sight of the old "bear's" face under an almond-tree that grew out of the hedge.

"Good day, father," called David.

"Why, is it you, my boy? How come you to be out on the road at this time of day? There is your way in," he added, pointing to a little wicket gate. "My vines have flowered and not a shoot has been frosted. There will be twenty puncheons or more to the acre this year; but then look at all the dung that has been put on the land!"

"Father, I have come on important business."

"Very well; how are your presses doing? You must be making heaps of money as big as yourself."

"I shall some day, father, but I am not very well off just now."

"They all tell me that I ought not to put on so much

manure," replied his father. "The gentry, that is M. le Marquis, M. le Comte, and Monsieur What-do-you-call-'em, say that I am letting down the quality of the wine. What is the good of book-learning except to muddle your wits? Just you listen: these gentlemen get seven, or sometimes eight puncheons of wine to the acre, and they sell them for sixty francs apiece, that means four hundred francs per acre at most in a good year. Now, I make twenty puncheons, and get thirty francs apiece for them—that is six hundred francs! And where are they, the fools? Quality, quality, what is quality to me? They can keep their quality for themselves, these Lord Marquises. Quality means hard cash for me, that is what it means. You were saying?——"

"I am going to be married, father, and I have come to ask for——"

"Ask me for what? Nothing of the sort, my boy. Marry; I give you my consent, but as for giving you anything else, I haven't a penny to bless myself with. Dressing the soil is the ruin of me. These two years I have been paying money out of pocket for top-dressing, and taxes, and expenses of all kinds; Government eats up everything, nearly all the profit goes to the Government. The poor growers have made nothing these last two seasons. This year things don't look so bad; and, of course, the beggarly puncheons have gone up to eleven francs already. We work to put money into the coopers' pockets. Why, are you going to marry before the vintage?——"

"I only came to ask for your consent, father."

"Oh! that is another thing. And who is the victim, if one may ask?"

"I am going to marry Mlle. Eve Chardon."

"Who may she be? What kind of victual does she eat?"

"She is the daughter of the late M. Chardon, the druggist in L'Houmeau."

"You are going to marry a girl out of L'Houmeau! *you!* a burgess of Angoulême, and printer to His Majesty! This is what comes of book-learning! Send a boy to school, for-

sooth! Oh! well, then she is very rich, is she, my boy?" and the old vinegrower came up closer with a cajoling manner; "if you are marrying a girl out of L'Houmeau, it must be because she has lots of cash, eh? Good! you will pay me my rent now. There are two years and one-quarter owing, you know, my boy; that is two thousand seven hundred francs altogether; the money will come just in the nick of time to pay the cooper. If it was anybody else, I should have a right to ask for interest; for, after all, business is business, but I will let you off the interest. Well, how much has she?"

"Just as much as my mother had."

The old vinegrower very nearly said, "Then she has only ten thousand francs!" but he recollected just in time that he had declined to give an account of her fortune to her son, and exclaimed, "She has nothing!"

"My mother's fortune was her beauty and intelligence," said David.

"You just go into the market and see what you can get for it! Bless my buttons! what bad luck parents have with their children. David, when I married, I had a paper cap on my head for my whole fortune, and a pair of arms; I was a poor pressman; but with the fine printing-house that I gave you, with your industry, and your education, you might marry a burgess' daughter, a woman with thirty or forty thousand francs. Give up your fancy, and I will find you a wife myself. There is some one about three miles away, a miller's widow, thirty-two years old, with a hundred thousand francs in land. There is your chance! You can add her property to Marsac, for they touch. Ah! what a fine property we should have, and how I would look after it! They say she is going to marry her foreman Courtois, but you are the better man of the two. I would look after the mill, and she should live like a lady up in Angoulême."

"I am engaged, father."

"David, you know nothing of business; you will ruin yourself, I see. Yes, if you marry this girl out of L'Houmeau, I shall square accounts and summons you for the rent, for I

see that no good will come of this. Oh! my presses, my poor presses! it took some money to grease you and keep you going. Nothing but a good year can comfort me after this."

"It seems to me, father, that until now I have given you very little trouble——"

"And paid mighty little rent," put in his parent.

"I came to ask you something else besides. Will you build a second floor to your house, and some rooms above the shed?"

"Deuce a bit of it; I have not the cash, and that you know right well. Besides, it would be money thrown clean away, for what would it bring in? Oh! you get up early of a morning to come and ask me to build you a place that would ruin a king, do you? Your name may be David, but I have not got Solomon's treasury. Why, you are mad! or they changed my child at nurse. There is one for you that will have grapes on it," he said, interrupting himself to point out a shoot. "Offspring of this sort don't disappoint their parents; you dung the vines, and they repay you for it. I sent you to school; I spent any amount of money to make a scholar of you; I sent you to the Didots to learn your business; and all this fancy education ends in a daughter-in-law out of L'Houmeau without a penny to her name. If you had not studied books, if I had kept you under my eye, you would have done as I pleased, and you would be marrying a miller's widow this day with a hundred thousand francs in hand, to say nothing of the mill. Oh! your cleverness leads you to imagine that I am going to reward this fine sentiment by building palaces for you, does it? . . . Really, anybody might think that the house that has been a house these two hundred years was nothing but a pigsty, not fit for the girl out of L'Houmeau to sleep in! What next! She is the Queen of France, I suppose."

"Very well, father, I will build the second floor myself; the son will improve his father's property. It is not the usual way, but it happens so sometimes."

"What, my lad! you can find money for building, can you,

though you can't find money to pay the rent, eh? You sly dog, to come round your father."

The question thus raised was hard to lay, for the old man was only too delighted to seize an opportunity of posing as a good father without disbursing a penny; and all that David could obtain was his bare consent to the marriage and free leave to do what he liked in the house—at his own expense; the old "bear," that pattern of a thrifty parent, kindly consenting not to demand the rent and drain the savings to which David imprudently owned. David went back again in low spirits. He saw that he could not reckon on his father's help in misfortune.

In Angoulême that day people talked of nothing but the Bishop's epigram and Mme. de Bargeton's reply. Every least thing that happened that evening was so much exaggerated and embellished and twisted out of all knowledge, that the poet became the hero of the hour. While this storm in a teacup raged on high, a few drops fell among the *bourgeoisie;* young men looked enviously after Lucien as he passed on his way through Beaulieu, and he overheard chance phrases that filled him with conceit.

"There is a lucky young fellow!" said an attorney's clerk, named Petit-Claud, a plain-featured youth who had been at school with Lucien, and treated him with small, patronizing airs.

"Yes, he certainly is," answered one of the young men who had been present on the occasion of the reading; "he is a good-looking fellow, he has some brains, and Mme. de Bargeton is quite wild about him."

Lucien had waited impatiently until he could be sure of finding Louise alone. He had to break the tidings of his sister's marriage to the arbitress of his destinies. Perhaps after yesterday's soirée, Louise would be kinder than usual, and her kindness might lead to a moment of happiness. So he thought, and he was not mistaken; Mme. de Bargeton met him with a vehemence of sentiment that seemed like a touch-

ing progress of passion to the novice in love. She abandoned her hands, her beautiful golden hair, to the burning kisses of the poet who had passed through such an ordeal.

"If only you could have seen your face whilst you were reading," cried Louise, using the familiar *tu*, the caress of speech, since yesterday, while her white hands wiped the pearls of sweat from the brows on which she set a poet's crown. "There were sparks of fire in those beautiful eyes! From your lips, as I watched them, there fell the golden chains that suspend the hearts of men upon the poet's mouth. You shall read Chénier through to me from beginning to end; he is the lover's poet. You shall not be unhappy any longer; I will not have it. Yes, dear angel, I will make an oasis for you, there you shall live your poet's life, sometimes busy, sometimes languid; indolent, full of work, and musing by turns; but never forget that you owe your laurels to me, let that thought be my noble guerdon for the sufferings which I must endure. Poor love! the world will not spare me any more than it has spared you; the world is avenged on all happiness in which it has no share. Yes, I shall always be a mark for envy—did you not see that last night? The bloodthirsty insects are quick enough to drain every wound that they pierce. But I was happy; I lived. It is so long since all my heartstrings vibrated."

The tears flowed fast, and for all answer Lucien took Louise's hand and gave it a lingering kiss. Every one about him soothed and caressed the poet's vanity; his mother and his sister and David and Louise now did the same. Every one helped to raise the imaginary pedestal on which he had set himself. His friend's kindness and the fury of his enemies combined to establish him more firmly in his self-confident ambition; he lived in an unreal world. A young imagination readily falls in with the flattering estimates of others, a handsome young fellow so full of promise finds others eager to help him on every side, and only after one or two sharp and bitter lessons does he begin to see himself as an ordinary mortal.

"My beautiful Louise, do you mean in very truth to be my Beatrice, a Beatrice who condescends to be loved?"

Louise raised the fine eyes, hitherto down-dropped.

"If you show yourself worthy—some day!" she said, with an angelic smile which belied her words. "Are you not happy? To be the sole possessor of a heart, to speak freely at all times, with the certainty of being understood, is not this happiness?"

"Yes," he answered, with a lover's pout of vexation.

"Child!" she exclaimed, laughing at him. "Come, you have something to tell me, have you not? You came in absorbed in thought, my Lucien."

Lucien, in fear and trembling, confided to his beloved that David was in love with his sister Eve, that his sister Eve was in love with David, and that the two were to be married shortly.

"Poor Lucien!" said Louise; "he was afraid he should be beaten and scolded, as if it was he himself that was going to be married! Why, where is the harm?" she continued, her fingers toying with Lucien's hair. "What is your family to me when you are an exception? Suppose that my father were to marry his cook, would that trouble you much? Dear boy, lovers are for each other their whole family. Have I a greater interest than my Lucien in the world? Be great, find the way to win fame, that is our affair!"

This selfish answer made Lucien the happiest of mortals. But in the middle of the fantastic reasonings, with which Louise convinced him that they two were alone in the world, in came M. de Bargeton. Lucien frowned and seemed to be taken aback, but Louise made him a sign, and asked him to stay to dinner and to read André de Chénier aloud to them until people arrived for their evening game at cards.

"You will give her pleasure," said M. de Bargeton, "and me also. Nothing suits me better than listening to reading aloud after dinner."

Cajoled by M. de Bargeton, cajoled by Louise, waited upon with the respect which servants show to a favored guest of

the house, Lucien remained in the Hôtel de Bargeton, and began to think of the luxuries which he enjoyed for the time being as the rightful accessories of Lucien de Rubempré. He felt his position so strong through Louise's love and M. de Bargeton's weakness, that, as the rooms filled, he assumed a lordly air, which that fair lady encouraged. He tasted the delights of despotic sway which Naïs had acquired by right of conquest, and liked to share with him; and, in short, that evening he tried to act up to the part of the lion of a little town. A few of those who marked these airs drew their own conclusions from them, and thought that, according to the old expression, he had come to the last term with the lady. Amélie, who had come with M. du Châtelet, was sure of the deplorable fact, in a corner of the drawing-room, where the jealous and envious gathered together.

"Do not think of calling Naïs to account for the vanity of a youngster, who is as proud as he can be because he has got into society, where he never expected to set foot," said Châtelet. "Don't you see that this Chardon takes the civility of a woman of the world for an advance? He does not know the difference between the silence of real passion and the patronizing graciousness due to his good looks and youth and talent. It would be too bad if women were blamed for all the desires which they inspire. *He* certainly is in love with her, but as for Naïs——"

"Oh! Naïs," echoed the perfidious Amélie, "Naïs is well enough pleased. A young man's love has so many attractions—at her age. A woman grows young again in his company; she is a girl, and acts a girl's hesitation and manners, and does not dream that she is ridiculous. Just look! Think of a druggist's son giving himself a conqueror's airs with Mme. de Bargeton."

"Love knows nought of high or low degree," hummed Adrien.

There was not a single house in Angoulême next day where the degree of intimacy between M. Chardon (*alias* de Rubempré) and Mme. de Bargeton was not discussed; and though the

utmost extent of their guilt amounted to two or three kisses, the world already chose to believe the worst of both. Mme. de Bargeton paid the penalty of her sovereignty. Among the various eccentricities of society, have you never noticed its erratic judgments and the unaccountable differences in the standard it requires of this or that man or woman? There are some persons who may do anything; they may behave totally irrationally, anything becomes them, and it is who shall be first to justify their conduct; then, on the other hand, there are those on whom the world is unaccountably severe, they must do everything well, they are not allowed to fail nor to make mistakes, at their peril they do anything foolish; you might compare these last to the much-admired statues which must come down at once from their pedestal if the frost chips off a nose or a finger. They are not permitted to be human; they are required to be for ever divine and for ever impeccable. So one glance exchanged between Mme. de Bargeton and Lucien outweighed twelve years of Zizine's connection with Francis in the social balance; and a squeeze of the hand drew down all the thunders of the Charente upon the lovers.

David had brought a little secret hoard back with him from Paris, and it was this sum that he set aside for the expenses of his marriage and for the building of the second floor in his father's house. His father's house it was; but, after all, was he not working for himself? It would all be his again some day, and his father was sixty-eight years old. So David built a timbered second story for Lucien, so as not to put too great a strain on the old rifted house-walls. He took pleasure in making the rooms where the fair Eve was to spend her life as brave as might be.

It was a time of blithe and unmixed happiness for the friends. Lucien was tired of the shabbiness of provincial life, and weary of the sordid frugality that looked on a five-franc piece as a fortune, but he bore the hardships and the pinching thrift without grumbling. His moody looks had been succeeded by an expression of radiant hope. He saw

the star shining above his head, he had dreams of a great time to come, and built the fabric of his good fortune on M. de Bargeton's tomb. M. de Bargeton, troubled with indigestion from time to time, cherished the happy delusion that indigestion after dinner was a complaint to be cured by a hearty supper.

By the beginning of September, Lucien had ceased to be a printer's foreman; he was M. de Rubempré, housed sumptuously in comparison with his late quarters in the tumbledown attic with the dormer-window, where "young Chardon" had lived in L'Houmeau; he was not even a "man of L'Houmeau"; he lived in the heights of Angoulême, and dined four times a week with Mme. de Bargeton. A friendship had grown up between M. de Rubempré and the Bishop, and he went to the palace. His occupations put him upon a level with the highest rank; his name would be one day among the great names of France; and, in truth, as he went to and fro in his apartments, the pretty sitting-room, the charming bedroom, and the tastefully furnished study, he might console himself for the thought that he drew thirty francs every month out of his mother's and sister's hard earnings; for he saw the day approaching when *An Archer of Charles IX.,* the historical romance on which he had been at work for two years, and a volume of verse entitled *Marguerites,* should spread his fame through the world of literature, and bring in money enough to repay them all, his mother and sister and David. So, grown great in his own eyes, and giving ear to the echoes of his name in the future, he could accept present sacrifices with noble assurance; he smiled at his poverty, he relished the sense of these last days of penury.

Eve and David had set Lucien's happiness before their own. They had put off their wedding, for it took some time to paper and paint their rooms, and to buy the furniture, and Lucien's affairs had been settled first. No one who knew Lucien could wonder at their devotion. Lucien was so engaging, he had such winning ways, his impatience and his desires were so graciously expressed, that his cause was always

won before he opened his mouth to speak. This unlucky gift of fortune, if it is the salvation of some, is the ruin of many more. Lucien and his like find a world predisposed in favor of youth and good looks, and ready to protect those who give it pleasure with the selfish good-nature that flings alms to a beggar, if he appeals to the feelings and awakens emotion; and in this favor many a grown child is content to bask instead of putting it to a profitable use. With mistaken notions as to the significance and the motive of social relations, they imagine that they shall always meet with deceptive smiles; and so at last the moment comes for them when the world leaves them bald, stripped bare, without fortune or worth, like an elderly coquette by the door of a salon, or a stray rag in the gutter.

Eve herself had wished for the delay. She meant to establish the little household on the most economical footing, and to buy only strict necessaries; but what could two lovers refuse to a brother who watched his sister at her work, and said in tones that came from the heart, "How I wish I could sew!" The sober, observant David had shared in the devotion; and yet, since Lucien's triumph, David had watched him with misgivings; he was afraid that Lucien would change towards them, afraid that he would look down upon their homely ways. Once or twice, to try his brother, David had made him choose between home pleasures and the great world, and saw that Lucien gave up the delights of vanity for them, and exclaimed to himself, "They will not spoil him for us!" Now and again the three friends and Mme. Chardon arranged picnic parties in provincial fashion—a walk in the woods along the Charente, not far from Angoulême, and dinner out on the grass, David's apprentice bringing the basket of provisions to some place appointed beforehand; and at night they would come back, tired somewhat, but the whole excursion had not cost three francs. On great occasion, when they dined at a *restaurât,* as it is called, a sort of country inn, a compromise between a provincial wineshop and a Parisian *guinguette,* they would spend as much

as five francs, divided between David and the Chardons. David gave his brother infinite credit for forsaking Mme. de Bargeton and grand dinners for these days in the country, and the whole party made much of the great man of Angoulême.

Matters had gone so far, that the new home was very nearly ready, and David had gone over to Marsac to persuade his father to come to the wedding, not without a hope that the old man might relent at the sight of his daughter-in-law, and give something towards the heavy expenses of the alterations, when there befell one of those events which entirely change the face of things in a small town.

Lucien and Louise had a spy in Châtelet, a spy who watched, with the persistence of a hate in which avarice and passion are blended, for an opportunity of making a scandal. Sixte meant that Mme. de Bargeton should compromise herself with Lucien in such a way that she should be "lost," as the saying goes; so he posed as Mme. de Bargeton's humble confidant, admired Lucien in the Rue du Minage, and pulled him to pieces everywhere else. Naïs had gradually given him *les petites entrées,* in the language of the court, for the lady no longer mistrusted her elderly admirer; but Châtelet had taken too much for granted—love was still in the Platonic stage, to the great despair of Louise and Lucien.

There are, for that matter, love affairs which start with a good or a bad beginning, as you prefer to take it. Two creatures launch into the tactics of sentiment; they talk when they should be acting, and skirmish in the open instead of settling down to a siege. And so they grow tired of one another, expend their longings in empty space; and, having time for reflection, come to their own conclusions about each other. Many a passion that has taken the field in gorgeous array, with colors flying and an ardor fit to turn the world upside down, has turned home again without a victory, inglorious and crestfallen, cutting but a foolish figure after these vain alarums and excursions. Such mishaps are sometimes due to the diffidence of youth, sometimes to the demurs

of an inexperienced woman, for old players at this game seldom end in a fiasco of this kind.

Provincial life, moreover, is singularly well calculated to keep desire unsatisfied and maintain a lover's arguments on the intellectual plane; while, at the same time, the very obstacles placed in the way of the sweet intercourse which binds lovers so closely each to each, hurry ardent souls on towards extreme measures. A system of espionage of the most minute and intricate kind underlies provincial life; every house is transparent, the solace of close friendships which break no moral law is scarcely allowed; and such outrageously scandalous constructions are put upon the most innocent human intercourse, that many a woman's character is taken away without cause. One here and there, weighed down by her unmerited punishment, will regret that she has never known to the full the forbidden felicity for which she is suffering. The world, which blames and criticises with a superficial knowledge of the patent facts in which a long inward struggle ends, is in reality a prime agent in bringing such scandals about; and those whose voices are loudest in condemnation of the alleged misconduct of some slandered woman never give a thought to the immediate provocation of the overt step. That step many a woman only takes after she has been unjustly accused and condemned, and Mme. de Bargeton was now on the verge of this anomalous position.

The obstacles at the outset of a passion of this kind are alarming to inexperience, and those in the way of the two lovers were very like the bonds by which the population of Lilliput throttled Gulliver, a multiplicity of nothings, which made all movement impossible, and baffle the most vehement desires. Mme. de Bargeton, for instance, must always be visible. If she had denied herself to visitors when Lucien was with her, it would have been all over with her; she might as well have run away with him at once. It is true that they sat in the boudoir, now grown so familiar to Lucien that he felt as if he had a right to be there; but the doors stood scrupulously open, and everything was arranged with the

utmost propriety. M. de Bargeton pervaded the house like a cockchafer; it never entered his head that his wife could wish to be alone with Lucien. If he had been the only person in the way, Naïs could have got rid of him, sent him out of the house, or given him something to do; but he was not the only one; visitors flocked in upon her, and so much the more as curiosity increased, for your provincial has a natural bent for teasing, and delights to thwart a growing passion. The servants came and went about the house promiscuously and without a summons; they had formed the habits with a mistress who had nothing to conceal; any change now made in her household ways was tantamount to a confession, and Angoulême still hung in doubt.

Mme. de Bargeton could not set foot outside her house but the whole town knew whither she was going. To take a walk alone with Lucien out of Angoulême would have been a decided measure, indeed; it would have been less dangerous to shut herself up with him in the house. There would have been comments the next day if Lucien had stayed on till midnight after the rooms were emptied. Within as without her house, Mme. de Bargeton lived in public.

These details describe life in the provinces; an intrigue is either openly avoided or impossible anywhere.

Like all women carried away for the first time by passion, Louise discovered the difficulties of her position one by one. They frightened her, and her terror reacted upon the fond talk that fills the fairest hours which lovers spend alone together. Mme. de Bargeton had no country house whither she could take her beloved poet, after the manner of some women who will forge ingenious pretexts for burying themselves in the wilderness; but, weary of living in public, and pushed to extremities by a tyranny which afforded no pleasures sweet enough to compensate for the heaviness of the yoke, she even thought of Escarbas, and of going to see her aged father—so much irritated was she by these paltry obstacles.

Châtelet did not believe in such innocence. He lay in wait,

and watched Lucien into the house, and followed a few minutes later, always taking M. de Chandour, the most indiscreet person in the clique, along with him; and, putting that gentleman first, hoped to find a surprise by such perseverance in pursuit of the chance. His own part was a very difficult one to play, and its success was the more doubtful because he was bound to appear neutral if he was to prompt the other actors who were to play in his drama. So, to give himself a countenance, he had attached himself to the jealous Amélie, the better to lull suspicion in Lucien and in Mme. de Bargeton, who was not without perspicacity. In order to spy upon the pair, he had contrived of late to open up a stock controversy on the point with M. de Chandour. Châtelet said that Mme. de Bargeton was simply amusing herself with Lucien; she was too proud, too high-born, to stoop to the apothecary's son. The rôle of incredulity was in accordance with the plan which he had laid down, for he wished to appear as Mme. de Bargeton's champion. Stanislas de Chandour held that Mme. de Bargeton had not been cruel to her lover, and Amélie goaded them to argument, for she longed to know the truth. Each stated his case, and (as not unfrequently happens in small country towns) some intimate friends of the house dropped in in the middle of the argument. Stanislas and Châtelet vied with each other in backing up their opinions by observations extremely pertinent. It was hardly to be expected that the champions should not seek to enlist partisans. "What do you yourself think?" they asked, each of his neighbor. These polemics kept Mme. de Bargeton and Lucien well in sight.

At length one day Châtelet called attention to the fact that whenever he went with M. de Chandour to Mme. de Bargeton's and found Lucien there, there was not a sign nor a trace of anything suspicious; the boudoir door stood open, the servants came and went, there was nothing mysterious to betray the sweet crime of love, and so forth and so forth. Stanislas, who did not lack a certain spice of stupidity in his composition, vowed that he would cross the room on tiptoe

the next day, and the perfidious Amélie held him to his bargain.

For Lucien that morrow was the day on which a young man tugs out some of the hairs of his head, and inwardly vows that he will give up the foolish business of sighing. He was accustomed to his situation. The poet, who had seated himself so bashfully in the boudoir-sanctuary of the queen of Angoulême, had been transformed into an urgent lover. Six months had been enough to bring him on a level with Louise, and now he would fain be her lord and master. He left home with a settled determination to be extravagant in his behavior; he would say that it was a matter of life or death to him; he would bring all the resources of torrid eloquence into play; he would cry that he had lost his head, that he could not think, could not write a line. The horror that some women feel for premeditation does honor to their delicacy; they would rather surrender upon the impulse of passion, than in fulfilment of a contract. In general, prescribed happiness is not the kind that any of us desire.

Mme. de Bargeton read fixed purpose in Lucien's eyes and forehead, and in the agitation in his face and manner, and proposed to herself to baffle him, urged thereto partly by a spirit of contradiction, partly also by an exalted conception of love. Being given to exaggeration, she set an exaggerated value upon her person. She looked upon herself as a sovereign lady, a Beatrice, a Laura. She enthroned herself, like some dame of the Middle Ages, upon a daïs, looking down upon the tourney of literature, and meant that Lucien, as in duty bound, should win her by his prowess in the field; he must eclipse "the sublime child," and Lamartine, and Sir Walter Scott, and Byron. The noble creature regarded her love as a stimulating power; the desire which she had kindled in Lucien should give him the energy to win glory for himself. This feminine Quixotry is a sentiment which hallows love and turns it to worthy uses; it exalts and reverences love. Mme. de Bargeton having made up her mind to play the part of Dulcinea in Lucien's life for seven or eight years

to come, desired, like many another provincial, to give herself as the reward of prolonged service, a trial of constancy which should give her time to judge her lover.

Lucien began the strife by a piece of vehement petulence, at which a woman laughs so long as she is heart-free, and saddens only when she loves; whereupon Louise took a lofty tone, and began one of her long orations, interlarded with high-sounding words.

"Was that your promise to me, Lucien?" she said, as she made an end. "Do not sow regrets in the present time, so sweet as it is, to poison my after life. Do not spoil the future, and, I say it with pride, do not spoil the present! Is not my whole heart yours? What more must you have? Can it be that your love is influenced by the clamor of the senses, when it is the noblest privilege of the beloved to silence them? For whom do you take me? Am I not your Beatrice? If I am not something more than a woman for you, I am less than a woman."

"That is just what you might say to a man if you cared nothing at all for him," cried Lucien, frantic with passion.

"If you cannot feel all the sincere love underlying my ideas, you will never be worthy of me."

"You are throwing doubts on my love to dispense yourself from responding to it," cried Lucien, and he flung himself weeping at her feet.

The poor boy cried in earnest at the prospect of remaining so long at the gate of paradise. The tears of the poet, who feels that he is humbled through his strength, were mingled with childish crying for a plaything.

"You have never loved me!" he cried.

"You do not believe what you say," she answered, flattered by his violence.

"Then give me proof that you are mine," said the disheveled poet.

Just at that moment Stanislas came up unheard by either of the pair. He beheld Lucien in tears, half reclining on the floor, with his head on Louise's knee. The attitude was sus-

picious enough to satisfy Stanislas; he turned sharply round upon Châtelet, who stood at the door of the salon. Mme. de Bargeton sprang up in a moment, but the spies beat a precipate retreat like intruders, and she was not quick enough for them.

"Who came just now?" she asked the servants.

"M. de Chandour and M. du Châtelet," said Gentil, her old footman.

Mme. de Bargeton went back, pale and trembling, to her boudoir.

"If they saw you just now, I am lost," she told Lucien.

"So much the better!" exclaimed the poet, and she smiled to hear the cry, so full of selfish love.

A story of this kind is aggravated in the provinces by the way in which it is told. Everybody knew in a moment that Lucien had been detected at Naïs' feet. M. de Chandour, elated by the important part he played in the affair, went first to tell the great news at the club, and thence from house to house, Châtelet hastening to say that *he* had seen nothing; but by putting himself out of court, he egged Stanislas on to talk, he drew him on to add fresh details; and Stanislas, thinking himself very witty, added a little to the tale every time that he told it. Every one flocked to Amélie's house that evening, for by that time the most exaggerated versions of the story were in circulation among the Angoulême nobility, every narrator having followed Stanislas' example. Women and men were alike impatient to know the truth; and the women who put their hands before their faces and shrieked the loudest were none other than Mesdames Amélie, Zéphirine, Fifine, and Lolotte, all with more or less heavy indictments of illicit love laid to their charge. There were variations in every key upon the painful theme.

"Well, well," said one of the ladies, "poor Naïs! have you heard about it? I do not believe it myself; she has a whole blameless record behind her; she is far too proud to be anything but a patroness to M. Chardon. Still, if it is true, I pity her with all my heart."

"She is all the more to be pitied because she is making herself frightfully ridiculous; she is old enough to be M. Lulu's mother, as Jacques called him. The little poet is twenty-two at most; and Naïs, between ourselves, is quite forty."

"For my own part," said M. du Châtelet, "I think that M. de Rubempré's position in itself proves Naïs' innocence. A man does not go down on his knees to ask for what he has had already."

"That is as may be!" said Francis, with levity that brought Zéphirine's disapproving glance down upon him.

"Do just tell us how it really was," they besought Stanislas, and formed a small, secret committee in a corner of the salon.

Stanislas, in the long length, had put together a little story full of facetious suggestions, and accompanied it with pantomime, which made the thing prodigiously worse.

"It is incredible!"

"At midday?"

"Naïs was the last person whom I should have suspected!"

"What will she do now?"

Then followed more comments, and suppositions without end. Châtelet took Mme. de Bargeton's part; but he defended her so ill, that he stirred the fire of gossip instead of putting it out.

Lili, disconsolate over the fall of the fairest angel in the Angoumoisin hierarchy, went, dissolved in tears, to carry the news to the palace. When the delighted Châtelet was convinced that the whole town was agog, he went off to Mme. de Bargeton's, where, alas! there was but one game of whist that night, and diplomatically asked Naïs for a little talk in the boudoir. They sat down on the sofa, and Châtelet began in an undertone—

"You know what Angoulême is talking about, of course?"

"No."

"Very well, I am too much your friend to leave you in ignorance. I am bound to put you in a position to silence slanders, invented, no doubt, by Amélie, who has the overweening audacity to regard herself as your rival. I came

to call on you this morning with that monkey of a Stanislas; he was a few paces ahead of me, and he came so far" (pointing to the door of the boudoir); "he says that he *saw* you and M. de Rubempré in such a position that he could not enter; he turned round upon me, quite bewildered as I was, and hurried me away before I had time to think; we were out in Beaulieu before he told me why he had beaten a retreat. If I had known, I would not have stirred out of the house till I had cleared up the matter and exonerated you, but it would have proved nothing to go back again then.

"Now, whether Stanislas' eyes deceived him, or whether he is right, *he must have made a mistake.* Dear Naïs, do not let that dolt trifle with your life, your honor, your future; stop his mouth at once. You know my position here. I have need of all these people, but still I am entirely yours. Dispose of a life that belongs to you. You have rejected my prayers, but my heart is always yours; I am ready to prove my love for you at any time and in any way. Yes, I will watch over you like a faithful servant, for no reward, but simply for the sake of the pleasure that it is to me to do anything for you, even if you do not know of it. This morning I have said everywhere that I was at the door of the salon, and had seen nothing. If you are asked to give the name of the person who told you about this gossip, pray make use of me. I should be very proud to be your acknowledged champion; but, between ourselves, M. de Bartegon is the proper person to ask Stanislas for an explanation. . . . Suppose that young Rubempré had behaved foolishly, a woman's character ought not to be at the mercy of the first hare-brained boy who flings himself at her feet. That is what I have been saying."

Naïs bowed in acknowledgment, and looked thoughtful. She was weary to disgust of provincial life. Châtelet had scarcely begun before her mind turned to Paris. Meanwhile Mme. de Bargeton's adorer found the silence somewhat awkward.

"Dispose of me, I repeat," he said.

"Thank you," answered the lady.

"What do you think of doing?"

"I shall see."

A prolonged pause.

"Are you so fond of that young Rubempré?"

A proud smile stole over her lips, she folded her arms, and fixed her gaze on the curtains. Châtelet went out; he could not read that high heart.

Later in the evening, when Lucien had taken his leave, and likewise the four old gentlemen who came for their whist, without troubling themselves about ill-founded tittle-tattle, M. de Bargeton was preparing to go to bed, and had opened his mouth to bid his wife good-night, when she stopped him.

"Come here, dear, I have something to say to you," she said, with a certain solemnity.

M. de Bargeton followed her into the boudoir.

"Perhaps I have done wrongly," she said, "to show a warm interest in M. de Rubempré, which he, as well as the stupid people here in the town, has misinterpreted. This morning Lucien threw himself here at my feet with a declaration, and Stanislas happened to come in just as I told the boy to get up again. A woman, under any circumstances, has claims which courtesy prescribes to a gentleman; but in contempt of these, Stanislas has been saying that he came unexpectedly and found us in an equivocal position. I was treating the boy as he deserved. If the young scatterbrain knew of the scandal caused by his folly, he would go, I am convinced, to insult Stanislas, and compel him to fight. That would simply be a public proclamation of his love. I need not tell you that your wife is pure; but if you think, you will see that it is something dishonoring for both you and me if M. de Rubempré defends her. Go at once to Stanislas and ask him to give you satisfaction for his insulting language; and mind, you must not accept any explanation short of a full and public retraction in the presence of witnesses of credit. In this way you will win back the respect of all right-minded people; you will behave like a man of spirit and a gentleman, and

you will have a right to my esteem. I shall send Gentil on horseback to the Escarbas; my father must be your second; old as he is, I know that he is the man to trample this puppet under foot that has smirched the reputation of a Nègrepelisse. You have the choice of weapons, choose pistols; you are an admirable shot."

"I am going," said M. de Bargeton, and he took his hat and his walking cane.

"Good, that is how I like a man to behave, dear; you are a gentleman," said his wife. She felt touched by his conduct, and made the old man very happy and proud by putting up her forehead for a kiss. She felt something like a maternal affection for the great child; and when the carriage gateway had shut with a clang behind him, the tears came into her eyes in spite of herself.

"How he loves me!" she thought. "He clings to life, poor, dear man, and yet he would give his life for me."

It did not trouble M. de Bargeton that he must stand up and face his man on the morrow, and look coolly into the muzzle of a pistol pointed straight at him; no, only one thing in the business made him feel uncomfortable, and on the way to M. de Chandour's house he quaked inwardly.

"What shall I say?" he thought within himself; "Naïs really ought to have told me what to say," and the good gentleman racked his brains to compose a speech that should not be ridiculous.

But people of M. de Bargeton's stamp, who live perforce in silence because their capacity is limited and their outlook circumscribed, often behave at great crises with a ready-made solemnity. If they say little, it naturally follows that they say little that is foolish; their extreme lack of confidence leads them to think a good deal over the remarks that they are obliged to make; and, like Balaam's ass, they speak marvelously to the point if a miracle loosens their tongues. So M. de Bargeton bore himself like a man of uncommon sense and spirit, and justified the opinion of those who held that he was a philosopher of the school of Pythagoras.

He reached Stanislas' house at nine o'clock, bowed silently to Amélie before a whole room full of people, and greeted others in turn with that simple smile of his, which under the present circumstances seemed profoundly ironical. There followed a great silence, like the pause before a storm. Châtelet had made his way back again, and now looked in a very significant fashion from M. de Bargeton to Stanislas, whom the injured gentleman accosted politely.

Châtelet knew what a visit meant at this time of night, when old M. de Bargeton was invariably in his bed. It was evidently Naïs who had set the feeble arm in motion. Châtelet was on such a footing in that house that he had some right to interfere in family concerns. He rose to his feet and took M. de Bargeton aside, saying, "Do you wish to speak to Stanislas?"

"Yes," said the old gentleman, well pleased to find a go-between who perhaps might say his say for him.

"Very well; go into Amélie's bedroom," said the controller of excise, likewise well pleased at the prospect of a duel which possibly might make Mme. de Bargeton a widow, while it put a bar between her and Lucien, the cause of the quarrel. Then Châtelet went to M. de Chandour.

"Stanislas," he said, "here comes Bargeton to call you to account, no doubt, for the things you have been saying about Naïs. Go into your wife's room, and behave, both of you, like gentlemen. Keep the thing quite quiet, and make a great show of politeness, behave with phlegmatic British dignity, in short."

In another minute Stanislas and Châtelet went to Bargeton.

"Sir," said the injured husband, "do you say that you discovered Mme. de Bargeton and M. de Rubempré in an equivocal position?"

"M. Chardon," corrected Stanislas, with ironical stress; he did not take Bargeton seriously.

"So be it," answered the other. "If you do not withdraw your assertions at once before the company now in your house,

I must ask you to look for a second. My father-in-law, M. de Nègrepelisse, will wait upon you at four o'clock to-morrow morning. Both of us may as well make our final arrangements, for the only way out of the affair is the one that I have indicated. I choose pistols, as the insulted party."

This was the speech that M. de Bargeton had ruminated on the way; it was the longest that he had ever made in life. He brought it out without excitement or vehemence, in the simplest way in the world. Stanislas turned pale. "After all, what did I see?" said he to himself.

Put between the shame of eating his words before the whole town, and fear, hideous fear, that caught him by the throat with burning fingers; confronted by this mute personage, who seemed in no humor to stand nonsense, Stanislas chose the more remote peril.

"All right. To-morrow morning," he said, thinking that the matter might be arranged somehow or other.

The three went back to the room. Everybody scanned their faces as they came in; Châtelet was smiling, M. de Bargeton looked exactly as if he were in his own house, but Stanislas looked ghastly pale. At the sight of his face, some of the women here and there guessed the nature of the conference, and the whisper, "They are going to fight!" circulated from ear to ear. One-half of the room was of the opinion that Stanislas was in the wrong, his white face and his demeanor convicted him of a lie; the other half admired M. de Bargeton's attitude. Châtelet was solemn and mysterious. M. de Bargeton stayed a few minutes, scrutinized people's faces, and retired.

"Have you pistols?" Châtelet asked in a whisper of Stanislas, who shook from head to foot.

Amélie knew what it all meant. She felt ill, and the women flocked about her to take her into her bedroom. There was a terrific sensation; everybody talked at once. The men stopped in the drawing-room, and declared, with one voice, that M. de Bargeton was within his right.

"Would you have thought the old fogey capable of acting like this?" asked M. de Saintot.

"But he was a crack shot when he was young," said the pitiless Jacques. "My father often used to tell me of Bargeton's exploits."

"Pooh! Put them at twenty paces, and they will miss each other if you give them cavalry pistols," said Francis, addressing Châtelet.

Châtelet stayed after the rest had gone to reassure Stanislas and his wife, and to explain that all would go off well. In a duel between a man of sixty and a man of thirty-five, all the advantage lay with the latter.

Early next morning, as Lucien sat at breakfast with David, who had come back alone from Marsac, in came Mme. Chardon with a scared face.

"Well, Lucien," she said, "have you heard the news? Everyone is talking of it, even the people in the market. M. de Bargeton all but killed M. de Chandour this morning in M. Tulloy's meadow; people are making puns on the name.* It seems that M. de Chandour said that he found you with Mme. de Bargeton yesterday."

"It is a lie! Mme. de Bargeton is innocent," cried Lucien.

"I heard about the duel from a countryman, who saw it all from his cart. M. de Nègrepelisse came over at three o'clock in the morning to be M. de Bargeton's second; he told M. de Chandour that if anything happened to his son-in-law, he should avenge him. A cavalry officer lent the pistols. M. de Nègrepelisse tried them over and over again. M. du Châtelet tried to prevent them from practising with the pistols, but they referred the question to the officer; and he said that, unless they meant to behave like children, they ought to have pistols in working order. The seconds put them at twenty-five paces. M. de Bargeton looked as if he had just come out for a walk. He was the first to fire; the ball lodged in M. de Chandour's neck, and he dropped before he could return the shot. The house-surgeon at the hospital has just said that M. de Chandour will have a wry neck for

*Tue l'oie.

the rest of his days. I came to tell you how it ended, lest you should go to Mme. de Bargeton's or show yourself in Angoulême, for some of M. de Chandour's friends might call you out."

As she spoke, the apprentice brought in Gentil, M. de Bargeton's footman. The man had come with a note for Lucien; it was from Louise.

"You have doubtless heard the news," she wrote, "of the duel between Chandour and my husband. We shall not be at home to any one to-day. Be careful; do not show yourself. I ask this in the name of the affection you bear me. Do you not think that it would be best to spend this melancholy day in listening to your Beatrice, whose whole life has been changed by this event, who has a thousand things to say to you?"

"Luckily, my marriage is fixed for the day after to-morrow," said David, "and you will have an excuse for not going to see Mme. de Bargeton quite so often."

"Dear David," returned Lucien, "she asks me to go to her to-day; and I ought to do as she wishes, I think; she knows better than we do how I should act in the present state of things."

"Then is everything ready here?" asked Mme. Chardon.

"Come and see," cried David, delighted to exhibit the transformation of the first floor. Everything there was new and fresh; everything was pervaded by the sweet influences of early married days, still crowned by the wreath of orange blossoms and the bridal veil; days when the springtide of love finds its reflection in material things, and everything is white and spotless and has not lost its bloom.

"Eve's home will be fit for a princess," said the mother, "but you have spent too much, you have been reckless."

David smiled by way of answer. But Mme. Chardon had touched the sore spot in a hidden wound which caused the poor lover cruel pangs. The cost of carrying out his ideas

had far exceeded his estimates; he could not afford to build above the shed. His mother-in-law must wait awhile for the home he had meant to make for her. There is nothing more keenly painful to a generous nature than a failure to keep such promises as these; it is like mortification to the little vanities of affection, as they may be styled. David sedulously hid his embarrassment to spare Lucien; he was afraid that Lucien might be overwhelmed by the sacrifices made for his sake.

"Eve and her girl friends have been working very hard, too," said Mme. Chardon. "The wedding clothes and the house linen are all ready. The girls are so fond of her, that, without letting her know about it, they have covered the mattresses with white twill and a rose-colored piping at the edges. So pretty! It makes one wish one were going to be married."

Mother and daughter had spent all their little savings to furnish David's home with the things of which a young bachelor never thinks. They knew that he was furnishing with great splendor, for something had been said about ordering a dinner-service from Limoges, and the two women had striven to make Eve's contributions to the housekeeping worthy of David's. This little emulation in love and generosity could but bring the husband and wife into difficulties at the very outset of their married life, with every sign of homely comfort about them, comfort that might be regarded as positive luxury in a place so behind the times as the Angoulême of those days.

As soon as Lucien saw his mother and David enter the bedroom with the blue-and-white draperies and neat furniture that he knew, he slipped away to Mme. de Bargeton. He found Naïs at table with her husband; M. de Bargeton's early morning walk had sharpened his appetite, and he was breakfasting quite unconcernedly after all that had passed. Lucien saw the dignified face of M. de Nègrepelisse, the old provincial noble, a relic of the old French *noblesse*, sitting beside Naïs.

When Gentil announced M. de Rubempré, the white-headed old man gave him a keen, curious glance; the father was anxious to form his own opinions of this man whom his daughter had singled out for notice. Lucien's extreme beauty made such a vivid impression upon him, that he could not repress an approving glance; but at the same time he seemed to regard the affair as a flirtation, a mere passing fancy on his daughter's part. Breakfast over, Louise could leave her father and M. de Bargeton together; she beckoned Lucien to follow her as she withdrew.

"Dear," she said, and the tones of her voice were half glad, half melancholy, "I am going to Paris, and my father is taking Bargeton back with him to the Escarbas, where he will stay during my absence. Mme. d'Espard (she was a Blamont-Chauvry before her marriage) has great influence herself, and influential relations. The d'Espards are connections of ours; they are the older branch of the Nègrepelisses; and if she vouchsafes to acknowledge the relationship, I intend to cultivate her a good deal; she may perhaps procure a place for Bargeton. At my solicitation, it might be desired at Court that he should represent the Charente, and that would be a step towards his election here. If he were a deputy, it would further other steps that I wish to take in Paris. You, my darling, have brought about this change in my life. After this morning's duel, I am obliged to shut up my house for some time; for there will be people who will side with the Chandours against us. In our position, and in a small town, absence is the only way of softening down bad feeling. But I shall either succeed, and never see Angoulême again, or I shall not succeed, and then I mean to wait in Paris until the time comes when I can spend my summers at the Escarbas and the winters in Paris. It is the only life for a woman of quality, and I have waited too long before entering upon it. The one day will be enough for our preparations; to-morrow night I shall set out, and you are coming with me, are you not? You shall start first. I will overtake you between Mansle and Ruffec, and we shall soon be in Paris. There,

beloved, is the life for a man who has anything in him. We are only at our ease among our equals; we are uncomfortable in any other society. Paris, besides, is the capital of the intellectual world, the stage on which you will succeed; overleap the gulf that separates us quickly. You must not allow your ideas to grow rancid in the provinces; put yourself into communication at once with the great men who represent the nineteenth century. Try to stand well with the Court and with those in power. No honor, no distinction, comes to seek out the talent that perishes for lack of light in a little town; tell me, if you can, the name of any great work of art executed in the provinces! On the contrary, see how Jean-Jacques, himself sublime in his poverty, felt the irresistible attraction of that sun of the intellectual world, which produces ever-new glories and stimulates the intellect—Paris, where men rub against one another. What is it but your duty to hasten to take your place in the succession of pleiades that rise from generation to generation? You have no idea how it contributes to the success of a clever young man to be brought into a high light, socially speaking. I will introduce you to Mme. d'Espard; it is not easy to get into her set; but you meet all the greatest people at her house, Cabinet ministers and ambassadors, and great orators from the Chamber of Deputies, and peers and men of influence, and wealthy or famous people. A young man with good looks and more than sufficient genius could fail to excite interest only by very bad management.

"There is no pettiness about those who are truly great; they will lend you their support; and when you yourself have a high position, your work will rise immensely in public opinion. The great problem for the artist is the problem of putting himself in evidence. In these ways there will be hundreds of chances of making your way, of sinecures, of a pension from the civil list. The Bourbons are so fond of encouraging letters and the arts, and you therefore must be a religious poet and a Royalist poet at the same time. Not

only is it the right course, but it is the way to get on in life. Do the Liberals and the Opposition give places and rewards, and make the fortunes of men of letters? Take the right road and reach the goal of genius. You have my secret, do not breathe a syllable of it, and prepare to follow me.—Would you rather not go?" she added, surprised that her lover made no answer.

To Lucien, listening to the alluring words, and bewildered by the rapid bird's-eye view of Paris which they brought before him, it seemed as if hitherto he had been using only half his brain and suddenly had found the other half, so swiftly his ideas widened. He saw himself stagnating in Angoulême like a frog under a stone in a marsh. Paris and her splendors rose before him; Paris, the Eldorado of provincial imaginings, with golden robes and the royal diadem about her brows, and arms outstretched to talent of every kind. Great men would greet him there as one of their order. Everything smiled upon genius. There, there were no jealous booby-squires to invent stinging gibes and humiliate a man of letters; there was no stupid indifference to poetry in Paris. Paris was the fountain-head of poetry; there the poet was brought into the light and paid for his work. Publishers should no sooner read the opening pages of *An Archer of Charles IX.* than they should open their cash-boxes with "How much do you want?" And besides all this, he understood that this journey with Mme. de Bargeton would virtually give her to him; that they should live together.

So at the words, "Would you rather not go?" tears came into his eyes, he flung his arms about Louise, held her tightly to his heart, and marbled her throat with impassioned kisses. Suddenly he checked himself, as if memory had dealt him a blow.

"Great heavens!" he cried, "my sister is to be married on the day after to-morrow!"

That exclamation was the last expiring cry of noble and single-hearted boyhood. The so-powerful ties that bind



young hearts to home, and a first friendship, and all early affections, were to be severed at one ruthless blow.

"Well," cried the haughty Nègrepelisse, "and what has your sister's marriage to do with the progress of our love? Have you set your mind so much on being best man at a wedding party of tradespeople and workingmen, that you cannot give up these exalted joys for my sake? A great sacrifice, indeed!" she went on, scornfully. "This morning I sent my husband out to fight in your quarrel. There, sir, go; I am mistaken in you."

She sank fainting upon the sofa. Lucien went to her, entreating her pardon, calling execrations upon his family, his sister, and David.

"I had such faith in you!" she said. "M. de Cante-Croix had an adored mother; but to win a letter from me, and the words 'I am satisfied,' he fell in the thick of the fight. And now, when I ask you to take a journey with me, you cannot think of giving up a wedding dinner for my sake."

Lucien was ready to kill himself; his desperation was so unfeigned, that Louise forgave him, though at the same time she made him feel that he must redeem his mistake.

"Come, come," she said, "be discreet, and to-morrow at midnight be upon the road, a hundred paces out of Mansle."

Lucien felt the globe shrink under his feet; he went back to David's house, hopes pursuing him as the Furies followed Orestes, for he had glimmerings of endless difficulties, all summed up in the appalling words, "Where is the money to come from?"

He stood in such terror of David's perspicacity, that he locked himself into his pretty new study until he could recover himself, his head was swimming in this new position. So he must leave the rooms just furnished for him at such a cost, and all the sacrifices that had been made for him had been made in vain. Then it occurred to Lucien that his mother might take the rooms and save David the heavy expense of building at the end of the yard, as he had meant to do; his departure would be, in fact, a convenience to the fam-

ily. He discovered any quantity of urgent reasons for his sudden flight; for there is no such Jesuit as the desire of your heart. He hurried down at once to tell the news to his sister in L'Houmeau and to take counsel with her. As he reached Postel's shop, he bethought himself that if all other means failed, he could borrow enough to live upon for a year from his father's successor.

"Three francs per day will be abundance for me if I live with Louise," he thought; "it is only a thousand francs for a whole year. And in six months' time I shall have plenty of money."

Then, under seal and promise of secrecy, Eve and her mother heard Lucien's confidences. Both the women began to cry as they heard of the ambitious plans; and when he asked the reason of their trouble, they told him that every penny they possessed had been spent on table-linen, house-linen, Eve's wedding clothes, and on a host of things that David had overlooked. They had been so glad to do this, for David had made a marriage-settlement of ten thousand francs on Eve. Lucien then spoke of his idea of a loan, and Mme. Chardon undertook to ask M. Postel to lend them a thousand francs for a twelve-month.

"But, Lucien," said Eve, as a thought clutched at her heart, "you will not be here at my wedding! Oh! come back, I will put it off for a few days. Surely she will give you leave to come back in a fortnight, if only you go with her now? Surely, she would spare you to us for a week, Lucien, when we brought you up for her? We shall have no luck if you are not at the wedding. . . . But will a thousand francs be enough for you?" she asked, suddenly interrupting herself. "Your coat suits you divinely, but you have only that one! You have only two fine shirts, the other six are coarse linen; and three of your white ties are just common muslin, there are only two lawn cravats, and your pocket-handkerchiefs are not good ones. Where will you find a sister in Paris who will get up your linen in one day as you want it? You will want ever so much more. Then you have just the one pair of new

nankeen trousers, last year's trousers are tight for you; you will be obliged to have clothes made in Paris, and Paris prices are not like Angoulême prices. You have only two presentable white waistcoats; I have mended the others already. Come, I advise you to take two thousand francs."

David came in as she spoke, and apparently heard the last two words, for he looked at the brother and sister and said nothing.

"Do not keep anything from me," he said at last.

"Well," exclaimed Eve, "he is going away with *her.*"

Mme. Chardon came in again, and, not seeing David, began at once:

"Postel is willing to lend you the thousand francs, Lucien," she said, "but only for six months; and even then he wants you to let him have a bill endorsed by your brother-in-law, for he says that you are giving him no security."

She turned and saw David, and there was a deep silence in the room. The Chardons thought how they had abused David's goodness, and felt ashamed. Tears stood in the young printer's eyes.

"Then you will not be here at our wedding," he began. "You are not going to live with us! And here have I been squandering all that I had! Oh! Lucien, as I came along, bringing Eve her little bits of wedding jewelry, I did not think that I should be sorry I spent the money on them." He brushed his hand over his eyes as he drew the little cases from his pocket.

He set down the tiny morocco-covered boxes on the table in front of his mother-in-law.

"Oh! why do you think so much for me?" protested Eve, giving him a divinely sweet smile that belied her words.

"Mamma, dear," said David, "just tell M. Postel that I will put my name to the bill, for I can tell from your face, Lucien, that you have quite made up your mind to go."

Lucien's head sank dejectedly; there was a little pause, then he said, "Do not think hardly of me, my dear, good angels."

He put his arms about Eve and David, and drew them

close, and held them tightly to him as he added, "Wait and see what comes of it, and you shall know how much I love you. What is the good of our high thinking, David, if it does not enable us to disregard the petty ceremonial in which the law entangles our affections? Shall I not be with you in spirit, in spite of the distance between us? Shall we not be united in thought? Have I not a destiny to fulfil? Will publishers come here to seek my *Archer of Charles IX.* and the *Marguerites?* A little sooner or a little later I shall be obliged in any case to do as I am doing to-day, should I not? And shall I ever find a better opportunity than this? Does not my success entirely depend upon my entrance on life in Paris through the Marquise d'Espard's salon?"

"He is right," said Eve; "you yourself were saying, were you not, that he ought to go to Paris at once?"

David took Eve's hand in his, and drew her into the narrow little room where she had slept for seven years.

"Love, you were saying just now that he would want two thousand francs?" he said in her ear. "Postel is only lending one thousand."

Eve gave her betrothed a look, and he read all her anguish in her eyes.

"Listen, my adored Eve, we are making a bad start in life. Yes, my expenses have taken all my capital; I have just two thousand francs left, and half of it will be wanted to carry on the business. If we give your brother the thousand francs, it will mean that we are giving away our bread, that we shall live in anxiety. If I were alone, I know what I should do; but we are two. Decide for us."

Eve, distracted, sprang to her lover's arms, and kissed him tenderly, as she answered through her tears:

"Do as you would do if you were alone; I will work to earn the money."

In spite of the most impassioned kiss ever given and taken by betrothed lovers, David left Eve overcome with trouble, and went out to Lucien.

"Do not worry yourself," he said; "you shall have your two thousand francs."

"Go in to see Postel," said Mme. Chardon, "for you must both give your signatures to the bill."

When Lucien and David came back again unexpectedly, they found Eve and her mother on their knees in prayer. The women felt sure that Lucien's return would bring the realization of many hopes; but at that moment they could only feel how much they were losing in the parting, and the happiness to come seemed too dearly bought by an absence that broke up their life together, and would fill the coming days with innumerable fears for Lucien.

"If you could ever forget this sight," David said in Lucien's ear, "you would be the basest of men."

David, no doubt, thought that these brave words were needed; Mme. de Bargeton's influence seemed to him less to be feared than his friend's unlucky instability of character, Lucien was so easily led for good or evil. Eve soon packed Lucien's clothes; the Fernando Cortez of literature carried but little baggage. He was wearing his best overcoat, his best waistcoat, and one of the two fine shirts. The whole of his linen, the celebrated coat, and his manuscript made up so small a package that to hide it from Mme. de Bargeton, David proposed to send it by coach to a paper merchant with whom he had dealings, and wrote and advised him to that effect, and asked him to keep the parcel until Lucien sent for it.

In spite of Mme. de Bargeton's precautions, Châtelet found out that she was leaving Angoulême; and with a view to discovering whether she was traveling alone or with Lucien, he sent his man to Ruffec with instructions to watch every carriage that changed horses at that stage.

"If she is taking her poet with her," thought he, "I have her now."

Lucien set out before daybreak the next morning. David went with him. David had hired a cabriolet, pretending that he was going to Marsac on business, a little piece of deception which seemed probable under the circumstances. The two

friends went to Marsac, and spent part of the day with the old "bear." As evening came on they set out again, and in the beginning of the dawn they waited in the road, on the further side of Mansle, for Mme. de Bargeton. When the seventy-year-old traveling carriage, which he had many a time seen in the coach-house, appeared in sight, Lucien felt more deeply moved than he had ever been in his life before; he sprang into David's arms.

"God grant that this may be for your good!" said David, and he climbed into the shabby cabriolet and drove away with a feeling of dread clutching at his heart; he had terrible presentiments of the fate awaiting Lucien in Paris.

PART II

EVE AND DAVID

LUCIEN had gone to Paris; and David Séchard, with the courage and intelligence of the ox which painters give the Evangelist for accompanying symbol, set himself to make the large fortune for which he had wished that evening down by the Charente, when he sat with Eve by the weir, and she gave him her hand and her heart. He wanted to make the money quickly, and less for himself than for Eve's sake and Lucien's. He would place his wife amid the elegant and comfortable surroundings that were hers by right, and his strong arm should sustain her brother's ambitions—this was the programme that he saw before his eyes in letters of fire.

Journalism and politics, the immense development of the book trade, of literature and of the sciences; the increase of public interest in matters touching the various industries in the country; in fact, the whole social tendency of the epoch following the establishment of the Restoration produced an enormous increase in the demand for paper. The supply required was almost ten times as large as the quantity in which the celebrated Ouvrard speculated at the outset of the Revolution. Then Ouvrard could buy up first the entire stock of paper and then the manufacturers; but in the year 1821 there were so many paper-mills in France, that no one could hope to repeat his success; and David had neither audacity enough nor capital enough for such a speculation. Machinery for producing paper in any length was just coming into use in England. It was one of the most urgent needs of the time, therefore, that the paper trade should keep pace with the requirements of the French system of civil government, a system by which the right of discussion was to be extended to

every man, and the whole fabric based upon continual expression of individual opinion; a grave misfortune, for the nation that deliberates is but little wont to act.

So, strange coincidence! while Lucien was drawn into the great machinery of journalism, where he was like to leave his honor and his intelligence torn to shreds, David Séchard, at the back of his printing-house, foresaw all the practical consequences of the increased activity of the periodical press. He saw the direction in which the spirit of the age was tending, and sought to find means to the required end. He saw also that there was a fortune awaiting the discoverer of cheap paper, and the event has justified his clearsightedness. Within the last fifteen years, the Patent Office has received more than a hundred applications from persons claiming to have discovered cheap substances to be employed in the manufacture of paper. David felt more than ever convinced that this would be no brilliant triumph, it is true, but a useful and immensely profitable discovery; and after his brother-in-law went to Paris, he became more and more absorbed in the problem which he had set himself to solve.

The expenses of his marriage and of Lucien's journey to Paris had exhausted all his resources; he confronted the extreme of poverty at the very outset of married life. He had kept one thousand francs for the working expenses of the business, and owed a like sum, for which he had given a bill to Postel the druggist. So here was a double problem for this deep thinker; he must invent a method of making cheap paper, and that quickly; he must make the discovery, in fact, in order to apply the proceeds to the needs of the household and of the business. What words can describe the brain that can forget the cruel preoccupations caused by hidden want, by the daily needs of a family and the daily drudgery of a printer's business, which requires such minute, painstaking care; and soar, with the enthusiasm and intoxication of the man of science, into the regions of the unknown in quest of a secret which daily eludes the most subtle experiment? And the inventor, alas! as will shortly be seen, has plenty of woes

to endure, besides the ingratitude of the many; idle folk that can do nothing themselves tell them, "Such a one is a born inventor; he could not do otherwise. He no more deserves credit for his invention than a prince for being born to rule! He is simply exercising his natural faculties, and his work is its own reward," and the people believe them.

Marriage brings profound mental and physical perturbations into a girl's life; and if she marries under the ordinary conditions of lower middle-class life, she must moreover begin to study totally new interests and initiate herself in the intricacies of business. With marriage, therefore, she enters upon a phase of her existence when she is necessarily on the watch before she can act. Unfortunately, David's love for his wife retarded this training; he dared not tell her the real state of affairs on the day after their wedding, nor for some time afterwards. His father's avarice condemned him to the most grinding poverty, but he could not bring himself to spoil the honeymoon by beginning his wife's commercial education and prosaic apprenticeship to his laborious craft. So it came to pass that housekeeping, no less than working expenses, ate up the thousand francs, his whole fortune. For four months David gave no thought to the future, and his wife remained in ignorance. The awakening was terrible! Postel's bill fell due; there was no money to meet it, and Eve knew enough of the debt and its cause to give up her bridal trinkets and silver.

That evening Eve tried to induce David to talk of their affairs, for she had noticed that he was giving less attention to the business and more to the problem of which he had once spoken to her. Since the first few weeks of married life, in fact, David spent most of his time in the shed in the backyard, in the little room where he was wont to mould his ink-rollers. Three months after his return to Angoulême, he had replaced the old-fashioned round ink-balls by rollers made of strong glue and treacle, and an ink-table, on which the ink was evenly distributed, an improvement so obvious that Cointet Brothers no sooner saw it than they adopted the plan themselves.

By the partition wall of this kitchen, as it were, David had set up a little furnace with a copper pan, ostensibly to save the cost of fuel over the recasting of his rollers, though the moulds had not been used twice, and hung there rusting upon the wall. Nor was this all; a solid oak door had been put in by his orders, and the walls were lined with sheet-iron; he even replaced the dirty window sash by panes of ribbed glass, so that no one without could watch him at his work.

When Eve began to speak about the future, he looked uneasily at her, and cut her short at the first word by saying, "I know all that you must think, child, when you see that the workshop is left to itself, and that I am dead, as it were, to all business interests; but see," he continued, bringing her to the window, and pointing to the mysterious shed, "there lies our fortune. For some months yet we must endure our lot, but let us bear it patiently; leave me to solve the problem of which I told you, and all our troubles will be at an end."

David was so good, his devotion was so thoroughly to be taken upon his word, that the poor wife, with a wife's anxiety as to daily expenses, determined to spare her husband the household cares and to take the burden upon herself. So she came down from the pretty blue-and-white room, where she sewed and talked contentedly with her mother, took possession of one of the two dens at the back of the printing-room, and set herself to learn the business routine of typography. Was it not heroism in a wife who expected ere long to be a mother?

During the past few months David's workmen had left him one by one; there was not work enough for them to do. Cointet Brothers, on the other hand, were overwhelmed with orders; they were employing all the workmen of the department; the alluring prospect of high wages even brought them a few from Bordeaux, more especially apprentices, who thought themselves sufficiently expert to cancel their articles and go elsewhere. When Eve came to look into the affairs of Séchard's printing works, she discovered that he employed three persons in all.

First in order stood Cérizet, an apprentice of Didot's, whom David had chosen to train. Most foremen have some one favorite among the great number of workers under them, and David had brought Cérizet to Angoulême, where he had been learning more of the business. Marion, as much attached to the house as a watch-dog, was the second; and the third was Kolb, an Alsacien, at one time a porter in the employ of the Messrs. Didot. Kolb had been drawn for military service, chance brought him to Angoulême, and David recognized the man's face at a review just as his time was about to expire. Kolb came to see David, and was smitten forthwith by the charms of the portly Marion; she possessed all the qualities which a man of his class looks for in a wife—the robust health that bronzes the cheeks, the strength of a man (Marion could lift a form of type with ease), the scrupulous honesty on which an Alsacien sets such store, the faithful service which bespeaks a sterling character, and finally, the thrift which had saved a little sum of a thousand francs, besides a stock of clothing and linen, neat and clean, as country linen can be. Marion herself, a big, stout woman of thirty-six, felt sufficiently flattered by the admiration of a cuirassier, who stood five feet seven inches in his stockings, a well-built warrior, strong as a bastion, and not unnaturally suggested that he should become a printer. So, by the time Kolb received his full discharge, Marion and David between them had transformed him into a tolerably creditable "bear," though their pupil could neither read nor write.

Job printing, as it is called, was not so abundant at this season but that Cérizet could manage it without help. Cérizet, compositor, clicker, and foreman, realized in his person the "phenomenal triplicity" of Kant; he set up type, read proof, took orders, and made out invoices; but the most part of the time he had nothing to do, and used to read novels in his den at the back of the workshop while he waited for an order for a bill-head or a trade circular. Marion, trained by old Séchard, prepared and wetted down the paper, helped Kolb with the printing, hung the sheets to dry, and cut them

to size; yet cooked the dinner, none the less, and did her marketing very early of a morning.

Eve told Cérizet to draw out a balance-sheet for the last six months, and found that the gross receipts amounted to eight hundred francs. On the other hand, wages at the rate of three francs per day—two francs to Cérizet, and one to Kolb—reached a total of six hundred francs; and as the goods supplied for the work printed and delivered amounted to some hundred odd francs, it was clear to Eve that David had been carrying on business at a loss during the first half-year of their married life. There was nothing to show for rent, nothing for Marion's wages, nor for interest on capital represented by the plant, the license, and the ink; nothing, finally, by way of allowance for the host of things included in the technical expression "wear and tear," a word which owes its origin to the cloths and silks which are used to moderate the force of the impression, and to save wear to the type; a square of stuff (the *blanket*) being placed between the platen and the sheet of paper in the press.

Eve made a rough calculation of the resources of the printing office and of the output, and saw how little hope there was for a business drained dry by the all-devouring activity of the brothers Cointet; for by this time the Cointets were not only contract printers to the town and the prefecture, and printers to the Diocese by special appointment—they were paper-makers and proprietors of a newspaper to boot. That newspaper, sold two years ago by the Séchards, father and son, for twenty-two thousand francs, was now bringing in eighteen thousand francs per annum. Eve began to understand the motives lurking beneath the apparent generosity of the brothers Cointet; they were leaving the Séchard establishment just sufficient work to gain a pittance, but not enough to establish a rival house.

When Eve took the management of the business, she began by taking stock. She set Kolb and Marion and Cérizet to work, and the workshop was put to rights, cleaned out, and set

in order. Then one evening when David came in from a country excursion, followed by an old woman with a huge bundle tied up in a cloth, Eve asked counsel of him as to the best way of turning to profit the odds and ends left them by old Séchard, promising that she herself would look after the business. Acting upon her husband's advice, Mme. Séchard sorted all the remnants of paper which she found, and printed old popular legends in double columns upon a single sheet, such as peasants paste upon their cottage walls, the histories of *The Wandering Jew, Robert the Devil, La Belle Maguelonne* and sundry miracles. Eve sent Kolb out as a hawker.

Cérizet had not a moment to spare now; he was composing the naïve pages, with the rough cuts that adorned them, from morning to night; Marion was able to manage the taking off; and all domestic cares fell to Mme. Chardon, for Eve was busy coloring the prints. Thanks to Kolb's activity and honesty, Eve sold three thousand broad sheets at a penny apiece, and made three hundred francs in all at a cost of thirty francs.

But when every peasant's hut and every little wine-shop for twenty leagues round was papered with these legends, a fresh speculation must be discovered; the Alsacien could not go beyond the limits of the department. Eve, turning over everything in the whole printing house, had found a collection of figures for printing a "Shepherd's Calendar," a kind of almanac meant for those who cannot read, letterpress being replaced by symbols, signs, and pictures in colored inks, red, black and blue. Old Séchard, who could neither read nor write himself, had made a good deal of money at one time by bringing out an almanac in hieroglyph. It was in book form, a single sheet folded to make one hundred and twenty-eight pages.

Thoroughly satisfied with the success of the broad sheets, a piece of business only undertaken by country printing offices, Mme. Séchard invested all the proceeds in the *Shepherd's Calendar,* and began it upon a large scale. Millions of copies of this work are sold annually in France. It is printed upon even coarser paper than the *Almanac of Liège,* a ream

(five hundred sheets) costing in the first instance about four francs; while the printed sheets sell at the rate of a halfpenny apiece—twenty-five francs per ream.

Mme. Séchard determined to use one hundred reams for the first impression; fifty thousand copies would bring in two thousand francs. A man so deeply absorbed in his work as David in his researches is seldom observant; yet David, taking a look round his workshop, was astonished to hear the groaning of a press and to see Cérizet always on his feet, setting up type under Mme. Séchard's direction. There was a pretty triumph for Eve on the day when David came in to see what she was doing, and praised the idea, and thought the calendar an excellent stroke of business. Furthermore, David promised to give advice in the matter of colored inks, for an almanac meant to appeal to the eye; and finally, he resolved to recast the ink-rollers himself in his mysterious workshop, so as to help his wife as far as he could in her important little enterprise.

But just as the work began with strenuous industry, there came letters from Lucien in Paris, heart-sinking letters that told his mother and sister and brother-in-law of his failure and distress; and when Eve, Mme. Chardon, and David each secretly sent money to their poet, it must be plain to the reader that the three hundred francs they sent were like their very blood. The overwhelming news, the disheartening sense that work as bravely as she might, she made so little, left Eve looking forward with a certain dread to an event which fills the cup of happiness to the full. The time was coming very near now, and to herself she said, "If my dear David has not reached the end of his researches before my confinement, what will become of us? And who will look after our poor printing office and the business that is growing up?"

The *Shepherd's Calendar* ought by rights to have been ready before the 1st of January, but Cérizet was working unaccountably slowly; all the work of composing fell to him; and Mme. Séchard, knowing so little, could not find fault, and was fain to content herself with watching the young Parisian.

Cérizet came from the great Foundling Hospital in Paris. He had been apprenticed to the MM. Didot, and between the ages of fourteen and seventeen he was David Séchard's fanatical worshiper. David put him under one of the cleverest workmen, and took him for his copy-holder, his page. Cérizet's intelligence naturally interested David; he won the lad's affection by procuring amusements now and again for him, and comforts from which he was cut off by poverty. Nature had endowed Cérizet with an insignificant, rather pretty little countenance, red hair, and a pair of dull blue eyes; he had come to Angoulême and brought the manners of the Parisian street-boy with him. He was formidable by reason of a quick, sarcastic turn and a spiteful disposition. Perhaps David looked less strictly after him in Angoulême; or, perhaps, as the lad grew older, his mentor put more trust in him or in the sobering influences of a country town; but be that as it may, Cérizet (all unknown to his sponsor) was going completely to the bad, and the printer's apprentice was acting the part of a Don Juan among little work girls. His morality, learned in Paris drinking-saloons, laid down the law of self-interest as the sole rule of guidance; he knew, moreover, that next year he would be "drawn for a soldier," to use the popular expression, saw that he had no prospects, and ran into debt, thinking that soon he should be in the army, and none of his creditors would run after him. David still possessed some ascendency over the young fellow, due not to his position as master, nor yet to the interest that he had taken in his pupil, but to the great intellectual power which the sometime street-boy fully recognized.

Before long Cérizet began to fraternize with the Cointets' workpeople, drawn to them by the mutual attraction of blouse and jacket, and the class feeling, which is, perhaps, strongest of all in the lowest ranks of society. In their company Cérizet forgot the little good doctrine which David had managed to instil into him; but, nevertheless, when the others joked the boy about the presses in his workshop ("old sabots," as the

"bears" contemptuously called them), and showed him the magnificent machines, twelve in number, now at work in the Cointets' great printing office, where the single wooden press was only used for experiments, Cérizet would stand up for David and fling out at the braggarts.

"My gaffer will go farther with his 'sabots' than yours with their cast-iron contrivances that turn out mass books all day long," he would boast. "He is trying to find out a secret that will lick all the printing offices in France and Navarre."

"And meantime you take your orders from a washer-woman, you snip of a foreman, on two francs a day."

"She is pretty though," retorted Cérizet; "it is better to have her to look at than the phizes of your gaffers."

"And do you live by looking at his wife?"

From the region of the wineshop, or from the door of the printing office, where these bickerings took place, a dim light began to break in upon the brothers Cointet as to the real state of things in the Séchard establishment. They came to hear of Eve's experiment, and held it expedient to stop these flights at once, lest the business should begin to prosper under the poor young wife's management.

"Let us give her a rap over the knuckles, and disgust her with the business," said the brothers Cointet.

One of the pair, the practical printer, spoke to Cérizet, and asked him to do proof-reading for them by piecework, to relieve their reader, who had more than he could manage. So it came to pass that Cérizet earned more by a few hours' work of an evening for the brothers Cointet than by a whole day's work for David Séchard. Other transactions followed; the Cointets seeing no small aptitude in Cérizet, he was told that it was a pity that he should be in a position so little favorable to his interests.

"You might be foreman some day in a big printing office, making six francs a day," said one of the Cointets one day, "and with your intelligence you might come to have a share in the business."

"Where is the use of my being a good foreman?" returned

Cérizet. "I am an orphan, I shall be drawn for the army next year, and if I get a bad number who is there to pay some one else to take my place?"

"If you make yourself useful," said the well-to-do printer, "why should not somebody advance the money?"

"It won't be my gaffer in any case!" said Cérizet.

"Pooh! Perhaps by that time he will have found out the secret."

The words were spoken in a way that could not but rouse the worst thoughts in the listener; and Cérizet gave the paper-maker and printer a very searching look.

"I do not know what he is busy about," he began prudently, as the master said nothing, "but he is not the kind of man to look for capitals in the lower case!"

"Look here, my friend," said the printer, taking up half-a-dozen sheets of the diocesan prayer-book and holding them out to Cérizet, "if you can correct these for us by to-morrow, you shall have eighteen francs to-morrow for them. We are not shabby here; we put our competitor's foreman in the way of making money. As a matter of fact, we might let Mme. Séchard go too far to draw back with her *Shepherd's Calendar*, and ruin her; very well, we give you permission to tell her that we are bringing out a *Shepherd's Calendar* of our own, and to call her attention too to the fact that she will not be the first in the field."

Cérizet's motive for working so slowly on the composition of the almanac should be clear enough by this time.

When Eve heard that the Cointets meant to spoil her poor little speculation, dread seized upon her; at first she tried to see a proof of attachment in Cérizet's hypocritical warning of competition; but before long she saw signs of an over-keen curiosity in her sole compositor—the curosity of youth, she tried to think.

"Cérizet," she said one morning, "you stand about on the threshold, and wait for M. Séchard in the passage, to pry into his private affairs; when he comes out into the yard to melt down the rollers, you are there looking at him, instead

of getting on with the almanac. These things are not right, especially when you see that I, his wife, respects his secrets, and take so much trouble on myself to leave him free to give himself up to his work. If you had not wasted time, the almanac would be finished by now, and Kolb would be selling it, and the Cointets could have done us no harm."

"Eh! madame," answered Cérizet. "Here am I doing five francs' worth of composing for two francs a day, and don't you think that that is enough? Why, if I did not read proofs of an evening for the Cointets, I might feed myself on husks."

"You are turning ungrateful early," said Eve, deeply hurt, not so much by Cérizet's grumbling as by his coarse tone, threatening attitude, and aggressive stare; "you will get on in life."

"Not with a woman to order me about though, for it is not often that the month has thirty days in it then."

Feeling wounded in her womanly dignity, Eve gave Cérizet a withering look and went upstairs again. At dinner-time she spoke to David.

"Are you sure, dear, of that little rogue Cérizet?"

"Cérizet!" said David. "Why, he was my youngster; I trained him, I took him on as my copy-holder. I put him to composing; anything that he is he owes to me, in fact! You might as well ask a father if he is sure of his child."

Upon this, Eve told her husband that Cérizet was reading proofs for the Cointets.

"Poor fellow! he must live," said David, humbled by the consciousness that he had not done his duty as a master.

"Yes, but there is this difference, dear, between Kolb and Cérizet—Kolb tramps about twenty leagues every day, spends fifteen or twenty sous, and brings us back seven and eight and sometimes nine francs of sales; and when his expenses are paid, he never asks for more than his wages. Kolb would sooner cut off his hand than work a lever for the Cointets; Kolb would not peer among the things that you throw out into the yard if people offered him a thousand crowns to do it; but Cérizet picks them up and looks at them."

It is hard for noble natures to think evil, to believe in ingratitude; only through rough experience do they learn the extent of human corruption; and even when there is nothing left them to learn in this kind, they rise to an indulgence which is the last degree of contempt.

"Pooh! pure Paris street-boy's curiosity," cried David.

"Very well, dear, do me the pleasure to step downstairs and look at the work done by this boy of yours, and tell me then whether he ought not to have finished our almanac this month."

David went into the workshop after dinner, and saw that the calendar should have been set up in a week. Then, when he heard that the Cointets were bringing out a similar almanac, he came to the rescue. He took command of the printing office, Kolb helped at home instead of selling broadsheets. Kolb and Marion pulled off the impressions from one form, while David worked another press with Cérizet, and superintended the printing in various inks. Every sheet must be printed four separate times, for which reason none but small houses will attempt to produce a *Shepherd's Calendar,* and that only in the country where labor is cheap, and the amount of capital employed in the business is so small that the interest amounts to little. Wherefore, a press which turns out beautiful work cannot compete in the printing of such sheets, coarse though they may be.

So, for the first time since old Séchard retired, two presses were at work in the old house. The calendar was, in its way, a masterpiece; but Eve was obliged to sell it for less than a halfpenny, for the Cointets were supplying hawkers at the rate of three centimes per copy. Eve made no loss on the copies sold to hawkers; on Kolb's sales, made directly, she gained; but her little speculation was spoiled. Cérizet saw that his fair employer distrusted him; in his own conscience he posed as the accuser, and said to himself, "You suspect me, do you? I will have my revenge," for the Paris street-boy is made on this wise. Cérizet accordingly took pay out of all proportion to the work of proof-reading done for the

Cointets, going to their office every evening for the sheets, and returning them in the morning. He came to be on familiar terms with them through the daily chat, and at length saw a chance of escaping the military service, a bait held out to him by the brothers. So far from requiring prompting from the Cointets, he was the first to propose the espionage and exploitation of David's researches.

Eve saw how little she could depend upon Cérizet, and to find another Kolb was simply impossible; she made up her mind to dismiss her one compositor, for the insight of a woman who loves told her that Cérizet was a traitor; but as this meant a deathblow to the business, she took a man's resolution. She wrote to M. Métivier, with whom David and the Cointets and almost every papermaker in the department had business relations, and asked him to put the following advertisement into a trade paper:

"For sale, as a going concern, a Printing Office, with License and Plant; situated at Angoulême. Apply for particulars to M. Métivier, Rue Serpente."

The Cointets saw the advertisement. "That little woman has a head on her shoulders," they said. "It is time that we took her business under our own control, by giving her enough work to live upon; we might find a real competitor in David's successor; it is to our interest to keep an eye upon that workshop."

The Cointets went to speak to David Séchard, moved thereto by this thought. Eve saw them, knew that her stratagem had succeeded at once, and felt a thrill of the keenest joy. They stated their proposal. They had more work than they could undertake, their presses could not keep pace with the work, would M. Séchard print for them? They had sent to Bordeaux for workmen, and could find enough to give full employment to David's three presses.

"Gentlemen," said Eve, while Cérizet went across to David's workshop to announce the two printers, "while my hus-

band was with the MM. Didot he came to know of excellent workers, honest and industrious men; he will choose his successor, no doubt, from among the best of them. If he sold his business outright for some twenty thousand francs, it might bring us in a thousand francs per annum; that would be better than losing a thousand yearly over such trade as you leave us. Why did you envy us the poor little almanac speculation, especially as we have always brought it out?"

"Oh, why did you not give us notice, madame? We would not have interfered with you," one of the brothers answered blandly (he was known as the "tall Cointet").

"Oh, come, gentlemen! you only began your almanac after Cérizet told you that I was bringing out mine."

She spoke briskly, looking full at "the tall Cointet" as she spoke. He lowered his eyes; Cérizet's treachery was proven to her.

This brother managed the business and the paper-mill; he was by far the cleverer man of business of the two. Jean showed no small ability in the conduct of the printing establishment, but in intellectual capacity he might be said to take colonel's rank, while Boniface was a general. Jean left the command to Boniface. This latter was thin and spare in person; his face, sallow as an altar candle, was mottled with reddish patches; his lips were pinched; there was something in his eyes that reminded you of a cat's eyes. Boniface Cointet never excited himself; he would listen to the grossest insults with the serenity of a bigot, and reply in a smooth voice. He went to mass, he went to confession, he took the sacrament. Beneath his caressing manners, beneath an almost spiritless look, lurked the tenacity and ambition of the priest, and the greed of the man of business consumed with a thirst for riches and honors. In the year 1820 "tall Cointet" wanted all that the *bourgeoisie* finally obtained by the Revolution of 1830. In his heart he hated the aristocrats, and in religion he was indifferent; he was as much or as little of a bigot as Bonaparte was a member of the Mountain; yet his vertebral column bent with a flexibility wonderful to behold before the

noblesse and the official hierarchy; for the powers that be, he humbled himself, he was meek and obsequious. One final characteristic will describe him for those who are accustomed to dealings with all kinds of men, and can appreciate its value —Cointet concealed the expression of his eyes by wearing colored glasses, ostensibly to preserve his sight from the reflection of the sunlight on the white buildings in the streets; for Angoulême, being set upon a hill, is exposed to the full glare of the sun. Tall Cointet was really scarcely above middle height; he looked much taller than he actually was by reason of the thinness, which told of overwork and a brain in continual ferment. His lank, sleek gray hair, cut in somewhat ecclesiastical fashion; the black trousers, black stockings, black waistcoat, and long puce-colored greatcoat (styled a *lévite* in the South), all completed his resemblance to a Jesuit.

Boniface was called "tall Cointet" to distinguish him from his brother, "fat Cointet," and the nicknames expressed a difference in character as well as a physical difference between a pair of equally redoubtable personages. As for Jean Cointet, a jolly, stout fellow, with a face from a Flemish interior, colored by the southern sun of Angoulême, thick-set, short and paunchy as Sancho Panza; with a smile on his lips and a pair of sturdy shoulders, he was a striking contrast to his older brother. Nor was the difference only physical and intellectual. Jean might almost be called Liberal in politics; he belonged to the Left Centre, only went to mass on Sundays, and lived on a remarkably good understanding with the Liberal men of business. There were those in L'Houmeau who said that this divergence between the brothers was more apparent than real. Tall Cointet turned his brother's seeming good nature to advantage very skilfully. Jean was his bludgeon. It was Jean who gave all the hard words; it was Jean who conducted the executions which little beseemed the elder brother's benevolence. Jean took the storms department; he would fly into a rage, and propose terms that nobody would think of accepting, to pave the way for his

brother's less unreasonable propositions. And by such policy the pair attained their ends, sooner or later.

Eve, with a woman's tact, had soon divined the characters of the two brothers; she was on her guard with foes so formidable. David, informed beforehand of everything by his wife, lent a profoundly inattentive mind to his enemies' proposals.

"Come to an understanding with my wife," he said, as he left the Cointets in the office and went back to his laboratory. "Mme. Séchard knows more about the business than I do myself. I am interested in something that will pay better than this poor place; I hope to find a way to retrieve the losses that I have made through you——"

"And how?" asked the fat Cointet, chuckling.

Eve gave her husband a look that meant, "Be careful!"

"You will be my tributaries," said David, "and all other consumers of papers besides."

"Then what are you investigating?" asked the hypocritical Boniface Cointet.

Boniface's question slipped out smoothly and insinuatingly, and again Eve's eyes implored her husband to give an answer that was no answer, or to say nothing at all.

"I am trying to produce paper at fifty per cent less than the present cost price," and he went. He did not see the glances exchanged between the brothers. "That is an inventor, a man of his build cannot sit with his hands before him.—Let us exploit him," said Boniface's eyes. "How can we do it?" said Jean's.

Mme. Séchard spoke. "David treats me just in the same way," she said. "If I show any curiosity, he feels suspicious of my name, no doubt, and out comes that remark of his; it is only a formula, after all."

"If your husband can work out the formula, he will certainly make a fortune more quickly than by printing; I am not surprised that he leaves the business to itself," said Boniface, looking across the empty workshop, where Kolb, seated upon a wetting-board, was rubbing his bread with a clove of

garlic; "but it would not suit our views to see this place in the hands of an energetic, pushing, ambitious competitor," he continued, "and perhaps it might be possible to arrive at an understanding. Suppose, for instance, that you consented for a consideration to allow us to put in one of our own men to work your presses for our benefit, but nominally for you; the thing is sometimes done in Paris. We would find the fellow work enough to enable him to rent your place and pay you well, and yet make a profit for himself."

"It depends on the amount," said Eve Séchard. "What is your offer?" she added, looking at Boniface to let him see that she understood his scheme perfectly well.

"What is your own idea?" Jean Cointet put in briskly.

"Three thousand francs for six months," said she.

"Why, my dear young lady, you were proposing to sell the place outright for twenty thousand francs," said Boniface with much suavity. "The interest on twenty thousand francs is only twelve hundred francs per annum at six per cent."

For a moment Eve was thrown into confusion; she saw the need for discretion in matters of business.

"You wish to use our presses and our name as well," she said; "and, as I have already shown you, I can still do a little business. And then we pay rent to M. Séchard senior, who does not load us with presents."

After two hours of debate, Eve obtained two thousand francs for six months, one thousand to be paid in advance. When everything was concluded, the brothers informed her that they meant to put in Cérizet as lessee of the premises. In spite of herself, Eve started with surprise.

"Isn't it better to have somebody who knows the workshop?" asked the fat Cointet.

Eve made no reply; she took leave of the brothers, vowing inwardly to look after Cérizet.

"Well, here are our enemies in the place!" laughed David, when Eve brought out the papers for his signature at dinner-time.

"Pshaw!" said she, "I will answer for Kolb and Marion;

they alone would look after things. Besides, we shall be making an income of four thousand francs from the workshop, which only costs us money as it is; and looking forward, I see a year in which you may realize your hopes."

"You were born to be the wife of a scientific worker, as you said by the weir," said David, grasping her hand tenderly.

But though the Séchard household had money sufficient that winter, they were none the less subjected to Cérizet's espionage, and all unconsciously became dependent upon Boniface Cointet.

"We have them now!" the manager of the paper-mill had exclaimed as he left the house with his brother the printer. "They will begin to regard the rent as a regular income; they will count upon it and run themselves into debt. In six months' time we will decline to renew the agreement, and then we shall see what this man of genius has at the bottom of his mind; we will offer to help him out of his difficulty by taking him into partnership and exploiting his discovery."

Any shrewd man of business who should have seen tall Cointet's face as he uttered those words, "taking him into partnership," would have known that it behooves a man to be even more careful in the selection of the partner whom he takes before the Tribunal of Commerce than in the choice of the wife whom he weds at the Mayor's office. Was it not enough already, and more than enough, that the ruthless hunters were on the track of the quarry? How should David and his wife, with Kolb and Marion to help them, escape the toils of a Boniface Cointet?

A draft for five hundred francs came from Lucien, and this, with Cérizet's second payment, enabled them to meet all the expenses of Mme. Séchard's confinement. Eve and the mother and David had thought that Lucien had forgotten them, and rejoiced over this token of remembrance as they rejoiced over his success, for his first exploits in journalism made even more noise in Angoulême than in Paris.

But David, thus lulled into a false security, was to receive a staggering blow, a cruel letter from Lucien:—

Lucien to David.

"MY DEAR DAVID,—I have drawn three bills on you, and negotiated them with Métivier; they fall due in one, two, and three months' time. I took this hateful course, which I know will burden you heavily, because the one alternative was suicide. I will explain my necessity some time, and I will try besides to send the amounts as the bills fall due.

"Burn this letter; say nothing to my mother and sister; for, I confess it, I have counted upon you, upon the heroism known so well to your despairing brother,

"LUCIEN DE RUBEMPRÉ."

By this time Eve had recovered from her confinement.

"Your brother, poor fellow, is in desperate straits," David told her. "I have sent him three bills for a thousand francs at one, two, and three months; just make a note of them," and he went out into the fields to escape his wife's questionings.

But Eve had felt very uneasy already. It was six months since Lucien had written to them. She talked over the news with her mother till her forebodings grew so dark that she made up her mind to dissipate them. She would take a bold step in her despair.

Young M. de Rastignac had come to spend a few days with his family. He had spoken of Lucien in terms that set Paris gossip circulating in Angoulême, till at last it reached the journalist's mother and sister. Eve went to Mme. de Rastignac, asked the favor of an interview with her son, spoke of all her fears, and asked him for the truth. In a moment Eve heard of her brother's connection with the actress Coralie, of his duel with Michel Chrestien, arising out of his own treacherous behavior to Daniel d'Arthez; she received, in short, a version of Lucien's history, colored by the personal feeling of a clever and envious dandy. Rastignac expressed sincere admiration for the abilities so terribly compromised, and a patriotic fear for the future of a native genius; spite

and jealousy masqueraded as pity and friendliness. He spoke of Lucien's blunders. It seemed that Lucien had forfeited the favor of a very great person, and that a patent conferring the right to bear the name and arms of Rubempré had actually been made out and subsequently torn up.

"If your brother, madame, had been well advised, he would have been on the way to honors, and Mme. de Bargeton's husband by this time; but what can you expect? He deserted her and insulted her. She is now Mme. la Comtesse Sixte du Châtelet, to her own great regret, for she loved Lucien."

"Is it possible!" exclaimed Mme. Séchard.

"Your brother is like a young eagle, blinded by the first rays of glory and luxury. When an eagle falls, who can tell how far he may sink before he drops to the bottom of some precipice? The fall of a great man is always proportionately great."

Eve came away with a great dread in her heart; those last words pierced her like an arrow. She had been wounded to the quick. She said not a word to anybody, but again and again a tear rolled down her cheeks, and fell upon the child at her breast. So hard is it to give up illusions sanctioned by family feeling, illusions that have grown with our growth, that Eve had doubted Eugène de Rastignac. She would rather hear a true friend's account of her brother. Lucien had given them d'Arthez's address in the days when he was full of enthusiasm for the brotherhood; she wrote a pathetic letter to d'Arthez, and received the following reply:—

D'Arthez to Mme. Séchard.

"MADAME,—You ask me to tell you the truth about the life that your brother is leading in Paris; you are anxious for enlightenment as to his prospects; and to encourage a frank answer on my part, you repeat certain things that M. de Rastignac has told you, asking me if they are true. With regard to the purely personal matter, madame, M. de Rastignac's confidences must be corrected in Lucien's favor. Your brother

wrote a criticism of my book, and brought it to me in remorse, telling me that he could not bring himself to publish it, although obedience to the orders of his party might endanger one who was very dear to him. Alas! madame, a man of letters must needs comprehend all passions, since it is his pride to express them; I understood that where a mistress and a friend are involved, the friend is inevitably sacrificed. I smoothed your brother's way; I corrected his murderous article myself, and gave it my full approval.

"You ask whether Lucien has kept my friendship and esteem; to this it is difficult to make an answer. Your brother is on a road that leads to ruin. At this moment I still feel sorry for him; before long I shall have forgotten him, of set purpose, not so much on account of what he has done already as for that which he inevitably will do. Your Lucien is not a poet, he has the poetic temper; he dreams, he does not think; he spends himself in emotion, he does not create. He is, in fact—permit me to say it—a womanish creature that loves to shine, the Frenchman's great failing. Lucien will always sacrifice his best friend for the pleasure of displaying his own wit. He would not hesitate to sign a pact with the Devil to-morrow if so he might secure a few years of luxurious and glorious life. Nay, has he not done worse already? He has bartered his future for the short-lived delights of living openly with an actress. So far, he has not seen the dangers of his position; the girl's youth and beauty and devotion (for she worships him) have closed his eyes to the truth; he cannot see that no glory or success or fortune can induce the world to accept the position. Very well, as it is now, so it will be with each new temptation—your brother will not look beyond the enjoyment of the moment. Do not be alarmed; Lucien will never go so far as a crime, he has not the strength of character; but he would take the fruits of a crime, he would share the benefit but not the risk—a thing that seems abhorrent to the whole world, even to scoundrels. Oh, he would despise himself, he would repent; but bring him once more to the test, and he would fail again; for he is weak of will,

he cannot resist the allurements of pleasure, nor forego the least of his ambitions. He is indolent, like all who would fain be poets; he thinks it clever to juggle with the difficulties of life instead of facing and overcoming them. He will be brave at one time, cowardly at another, and deserves neither credit for his courage, nor blame for his cowardice. Lucien is like a harp with strings that are slackened or tightened by the atmosphere. He might write a great book in a glad or angry mood, and care nothing for the success that he had desired for so long.

"When he first came to Paris he fell under the influence of an unprincipled young fellow, and was dazzled by his companion's adroitness and experience in the difficulties of a literary life. This juggler completely bewitched Lucien; he dragged him into a life which a man cannot lead and respect himself, and, unluckily for Lucien, love shed its magic over the path. The admiration that is given too readily is a sign of want of judgment; a poet ought not to be paid in the same coin as a dancer on the tight-rope. We all felt hurt when intrigue and literary rascality were preferred to the courage and honor of those who counseled Lucien rather to face the battle than to filch success, to spring down into the arena rather than become a trumpet in the orchestra.

"Society, madame, oddly enough, shows plentiful indulgence to young men of Lucien's stamp; they are popular, the world is fascinated by their external gifts and good looks. Nothing is asked of them, all their sins are forgiven; they are treated like perfect natures, others are blind to their defects, they are the world's spoiled children. And, on the other hand, the world is stern beyond measure to strong and complete natures. Perhaps in this apparently flagrant injustice society acts sublimely, taking a harlequin at his just worth, asking nothing of him but amusement, promptly forgetting him; and asking divine great deeds of those before whom she bends the knee. Everything is judged by the laws of its being; the diamond must be flawless; the ephemeral creation of fashion may be flimsy, bizarre, inconsequent. So Lucien may

perhaps succeed to admiration in spite of his mistakes; he has only to profit by some happy vein or to be among good companions; but if an evil angel crosses his path, he will go to the very depths of hell. 'Tis a brilliant assemblage of good qualities embroidered upon too slight a tissue; time wears the flowers away till nothing but the web is left; and if that is poor stuff, you behold a rag at the last. So long as Lucien is young, people will like him; but where will he be as a man of thirty? That is the question which those who love him sincerely are bound to ask themselves. If I alone had come to think in this way of Lucien, I might perhaps have spared you the pain which my plain speaking will give you; but to evade the questions put by your anxiety, and to answer a cry of anguish like your letter with commonplaces, seemed to me alike unworthy of you and of me, whom you esteem too highly; and besides, those of my friends who knew Lucien are unanimous in their judgment. So it appeared to me to be a duty to put the truth before you, terrible though it may be. Anything may be expected of Lucien, anything good or evil. That is our opinion, and this letter is summed up in that sentence. If the vicissitudes of his present way of life (a very wretched and slippery one) should bring the poet back to you, use all your influence to keep him among you; for until his character has acquired stability, Paris will not be safe for him. He used to speak of you, you and your husband, as his guardian angels; he has forgotten you, no doubt; but he will remember you again when tossed by tempest, with no refuge left to him but his home. Keep your heart for him, madame; he will need it.

"Permit me, madame, to convey to you the expression of the sincere respect of a man to whom your rare qualities are known, a man who honors your mother's fears so much, that he desires to style himself your devoted servant,

"D'Arthez."

Two days after the letter came, Eve was obliged to find a wet-nurse; her milk had dried up. She had made a god of her

brother; now, in her eyes, he was depraved through the exercise of his noblest faculties; he was wallowing in the mire. She, noble creature that she was, was incapable of swerving from honesty and scrupulous delicacy, from all the pious traditions of the hearth, which still burns so clearly and sheds its light abroad in quiet country homes. Then David had been right in his forecasts! The leaden hues of grief overspread Eve's white brow. She told her husband her secret in one of the pellucid talks in which married lovers tell everything to each other. The tones of David's voice brought comfort. Though the tears stood in his eyes when he knew that grief had dried his wife's fair breast, and knew Eve's despair that she could not fulfil her mother duties, he held out reassuring hopes.

"Your brother's imagination has led him astray, you see, child. It is so natural that a poet should wish for blue and purple robes, and hurry as eagerly after festivals as he does. It is a bird that loves glitter and luxury with such simple sincerity, that God forgives him if man condemns him for it."

"But he is draining our lives!" exclaimed poor Eve.

"He is draining our lives just now, but only a few months ago he saved us by sending us the first fruits of his earnings," said the good David. He had the sense to see that his wife was in despair, was going beyond the limit, and that love for Lucien would very soon come back. "Fifty years ago, or thereabouts, Mercier said in his *Tableau de Paris* that a man cannot live by literature, poetry, letters, or science, by the creatures of his brain, in short; and Lucien, poet that he is, would not believe the experience of five centuries. The harvests that are watered with ink are only reaped ten or twelve years after the sowing, if indeed there is any harvest after all. Lucien has taken the green wheat for the sheaves. He will have learned something of life, at any rate. He was the dupe of a woman at the outset; he was sure to be duped afterwards by the world and false friends. He has bought his experience dear, that is all. Our ancestors used to say,

'If the son of the house brings back his two ears and his honor safe, all is well——' "

"Honor!" poor Eve broke in. "Oh, but Lucien has fallen in so many ways! Writing against his conscience! Attacking his best friend! Living upon an actress! Showing himself in public with her. Bringing us to lie on straw——"

"Oh, that is nothing——!" cried David, and suddenly stopped short. The secret of Lucien's forgery had nearly escaped him, and, unluckily, his start left a vague, uneasy impression on Eve.

"What do you mean by nothing?" she answered. "And where shall we find the money to meet bills for three thousand francs?"

"We shall be obliged to renew the lease with Cérizet, to begin with," said David. "The Cointets have been allowing him fifteen per cent on the work done for them, and in that way alone he has made six hundred francs, besides contriving to make five hundred francs by job printing."

"If the Cointets know that, perhaps they will not renew the lease. They will be afraid of him, for Cérizet is a dangerous man."

"Eh! what is that to me!" cried David, "we shall be rich in a very little while. When Lucien is rich, dear angel, he will have nothing but good qualities."

"Oh! David, my dear, my dear; what is this that you have said unthinkingly? Then Lucien fallen into the clutches of poverty would not have the force of character to resist evil? And you think just as M. d'Arthez thinks! No one is great unless he has strength of character, and Lucien is weak. An angel who must not be tempted—what is that?"

"What but a nature that is noble only in its own region, its own sphere, its heaven? I will spare him the struggle; Lucien is not meant for it. Look here! I am so near the end now that I can talk to you about the means."

He drew several sheets of white paper from his pocket, brandished them in triumph, and laid them on his wife's lap.

"A ream of this paper, royal size, would cost five francs

at the most," he added, while Eve handled the specimens with almost childish surprise.

"Why, how did you make these sample bits?" she asked.

"With an old kitchen sieve of Marion's."

"And are you not satisfied yet?" asked Eve.

"The problem does not lie in the manufacturing process; it is a question of the first cost of the pulp. Alas, child, I am only a late comer in a difficult path. As long ago as 1794, Mme. Masson tried to use printed paper a second time; she succeeded, but what a price it cost! The Marquis of Salisbury tried to use straw as a material in 1800, and the same idea occurred to Séguin in France in 1801. Those sheets in your hand are made from the common rush, the *arundo phragmites,* but I shall try nettles and thistles; for if the material is to continue to be cheap, one must look for something that will grow in marshes and waste lands where nothing else can be grown. The whole secret lies in the preparation of the stems. At present my method is not quite simple enough. Still, in spite of this difficulty, I feel sure that I can give the French paper trade the privilege of our literature; papermaking will be for France what coal and iron and coarse potter's clay are for England—a monopoly. I mean to be the Jacquart of the trade."

Eve rose to her feet. David's simple-mindedness had roused her to enthusiasm, to admiration; she held out her arms to him and held him tightly to her, while she laid her head upon his shoulder.

"You give me my reward as if I had succeeded already," he said.

For all answer, Eve held up her sweet face, wet with tears, to his, and for a moment she could not speak.

"The kiss was not for the man of genius," she said, "but for my comforter. Here is a rising glory for the glory that has set; and, in the midst of my grief for the brother that has fallen so low, my husband's greatness is revealed to me.—Yes, you will be great, great like the Graindorges, the Rouvets, and Van Robais, and the Persian who discovered

madder, like all the men you have told me about; great men whom nobody remembers, because their good deeds were obscure industrial triumphs."

"What are they doing just now?"

It was Boniface Cointet who spoke. He was walking up and down outside in the Place du Mûrier with Cérizet watching the silhouettes of the husband and wife on the blinds. He always came at midnight for a chat with Cérizet, for the latter played the spy upon his former master's every movement.

"He is showing her the paper he made this morning, no doubt," said Cérizet.

"What is it made of?" asked the paper manufacturer.

"Impossible to guess," answered Cérizet; "I made a hole in the roof and scrambled up and watched the gaffer; he was boiling pulp in a copper pan all last night. There was a heap of stuff in a corner, but I could make nothing of it; it looked like a heap of tow, as near as I could make out."

"Go no farther," said Boniface Cointet in unctuous tones; "it would not be right. Mme. Séchard will offer to renew your lease; tell her that you are thinking of setting up for yourself. Offer her half the value of the plant and license, and, if she takes the bid, come to me. In any case, spin the matter out. . . . Have they no money?"

"Not a sou," said Cérizet.

"Not a sou," repeated tall Cointet.—"I have them now," said he to himself.

Métivier, paper manufacturers' wholesale agent, and Cointet Brothers, printers and paper manufacturers, were also bankers in all but name. This surreptitious banking system defies all the ingenuity of the Inland Revenue Department. Every banker is required to take out a license which, in Paris, costs five hundred francs; but no hitherto devised method of controlling commerce can detect the delinquents, or compel them to pay their due to the Government. And though Métivier and the Cointets were "outside brokers," in the language of the Stock Exchange, none the less among

them they could set some hundreds of thousands of francs moving every three months in the markets of Paris, Bordeaux, and Angoulême. Now it so fell out that that very evening Cointet Brothers had received Lucien's forged bills in the course of business. Upon this debt, tall Cointet forthwith erected a formidable engine, pointed, as will presently be seen, against the poor, patient inventor.

By seven o'clock next morning, Boniface Cointet was taking a walk by the mill stream that turned the wheels in his big factory; the sound of the water covered his talk, for he was talking with a companion, a young man of nine-and-twenty, who had been appointed attorney to the Court of First Instance in Angoulême some six weeks ago. The young man's name was Pierre Petit-Claud.

"You are a schoolfellow of David Séchard's, are you not?" asked tall Cointet by way of greeting to the young attorney. Petit-Claud had lost no time in answering the wealthy manufacturer's summons.

"Yes, sir," said Petit-Claud, keeping step with tall Cointet.

"Have you renewed the acquaintance?"

"We have met once or twice at most since he came back. It could hardly have been otherwise. In Paris I was buried away in the office or at the courts on week-days, and on Sundays and holidays I was hard at work studying, for I had only myself to look to." (Tall Cointet nodded approvingly.) "When we met again, David and I, he asked me what I had done with myself. I told him that after I had finished my time at Poitiers, I had risen to be Maître Olivet's head-clerk, and that some time or other I hoped to make a bid for his berth. I know a good deal more of Lucien Chardon (de Rubempré he calls himself now), he was Mme. de Bargeton's lover, our great poet, David Séchard's brother-in-law, in fact."

"Then you can go and tell David of your appointment, and offer him your services," said tall Cointet.

"One can't do that," said the young attorney.

"He has never had a lawsuit, and he has no attorney, so

one can do that," said Cointet, scanning the other narrowly from behind his colored spectacles.

A certain quantity of gall mingled with the blood in Pierre Petit-Claud's veins; his father was a tailor in L'Houmeau, and his schoolfellows had looked down upon him. His complexion was of the muddy and unwholesome kind which tells a tale of bad health, late hours and penury, and almost always of a bad disposition. The best description of him may be given in two familiar expressions—he was sharp and snappish. His cracked voice suited his sour face, meagre look, and magpie eyes of no particular color. A magpie eye, according to Napoleon, is a sure sign of dishonesty. "Look at So-and-so," he said to Las Cases at Saint Helena, alluding to a confidential servant whom he had been obliged to dismiss for malversation. "I do not know how I could have been deceived in him for so long; he has a magpie eye." Tall Cointet, surveying the weedy little lawyer, noted his face pitted with smallpox, the thin hair, and the forehead, bald already, receding towards a bald cranium; saw, too, the confession of weakness in his attitude with the hand on the hip. "Here is my man," said he to himself.

As a matter of fact, this Petit-Claud, who had drunk scorn like water, was eaten up with a strong desire to succeed in life; he had no money, but nevertheless he had the audacity to buy his employer's connection for thirty thousand francs, reckoning upon a rich marriage to clear off the debt, and looking to his employer, after the usual custom, to find him a wife, for an attorney always has an interest in marrying his successor, because he is the sooner paid off. But if Petit-Claud counted upon his employer, he counted yet more upon himself. He had more than average ability, and that of a kind not often found in the provinces, and rancor was the mainspring of his power. A mighty hatred makes a mighty effort.

There is a great difference between a country attorney and an attorney in Paris; tall Cointet was too clever not to know

this, and to turn the meaner passions that move a pettifogging lawyer to good account. An eminent attorney in Paris, and there are many who may be so qualified, is bound to possess to some extent the diplomate's qualities; he has so much business to transact, business in which large interests are involved; questions of such wide interest are submitted to him that he does not look upon procedure as machinery for bringing money into his pocket, but as a weapon of attack and defence. A country attorney, on the other hand, cultivates the science of costs, *broutille*, as it is called in Paris, a host of small items that swell lawyers' bills and require stamped paper. These less weighty matters of the law completely fill he country attorney's mind; he has a bill of costs always before his eyes, whereas his brother of Paris thinks of nothing but his fees. The fee is a honorarium paid by a client over and above the bill of costs, for the more or less skilful conduct of his case. One-half of the bill of costs goes to the Treasury, whereas the entire fee belongs to the attorney. Let us admit frankly that the fees received are seldom as large as the fees demanded and deserved by a clever lawyer. Wherefore, in Paris, attorneys, doctors, and barristers, like courtesans with a chance-come lover, take very considerable precautions against the gratitude of clients. The client before and after the lawsuit would furnish a subject worthy of Meissonier; there would be brisk bidding among attorneys for the possession of two such admirable bits of genre.

There is yet another difference between the Parisian and the country attorney. An attorney in Paris very seldom appears in court, though he is sometimes called upon to act as arbitrator (*référé*). Barristers, at the present day, swarm in the provinces; but in 1822 the country attorney very often united the functions of solicitor and counsel. As a result of this double life, the attorney acquired the peculiar intellectual defects of the barrister, and retained the heavy responsibilities of the attorney. He grew talkative and fluent, and lost his lucidity of judgment, the first necessity for the conduct of affairs. If a man of more than ordinary ability tries to do

the work of two men, he is apt to find that the two men are mediocrities. The Paris attorney never spends himself in forensic eloquence; and as he seldom attempts to argue for and against, he has some hope of preserving his mental rectitude. It is true that he brings the balista of the law to work, and looks for the weapons in the armory of judicial contradictions, but he keeps his own convictions as to the case, while he does his best to gain the day. In a word, a man loses his head not so much by thinking as by uttering thoughts. The spoken word convinces the utterer; but a man can act against his own judgment without warping it, and contrive to win in a bad cause without maintaining that it is a good one, like the barrister. Perhaps for this very reason an old attorney is the more likely of the two to make a good judge.

A country attorney, as we have seen, has plenty of excuses for his mediocrity; he takes up the cause of petty passions, he undertakes pettifogging business, he lives by charging expenses, he strains the Code of procedure and pleads in court. In a word, his weak points are legion; and if by chance you come across a remarkable man practising as a country attorney, he is indeed above the average level.

"I thought, sir, that you sent for me on your own affairs," said Petit-Claud, and a glance that put an edge on his words fell upon tall Cointet's impenetrable blue spectacles.

"Let us have no beating about the bush," returned Boniface Cointet. "Listen to me."

After that beginning, big with mysterious import, Cointet set himself down upon a bench, and beckoned Petit-Claud to do likewise.

"When M. du Hautoy came to Angoulême in 1804, on his way to his consulship at Valence, he made the acquaintance of Mme. de Senonches, then Mlle. Zéphirine, and had a daughter by her," added Cointet for the attorney's ear——"Yes," he continued, as Petit-Claud gave a start; "yes, and Mlle. Zéphirine's marriage with M. de Senonches soon followed the birth of the child. The girl was brought up in my mother's house; she is the Mlle. Françoise de la Haye in

whom Mme. de Senonches takes an interest; she is her godmother in the usual style. Now, my mother farmed land belonging to old Mme. de Cardanet, Mlle. Zéphirine's grandmother; and as she knew the secret of the sole heiress of the Cardanets and the Senonches of the older branch, they made me trustee for the little sum which M. François du Hautoy meant for the girl's fortune. I made my own fortune with those ten thousand francs, which amount to thirty thousand at the present day. Mme. de Senonches is sure to give the wedding clothes, and some plate and furniture to her goddaughter. Now, I can put you in the way of marrying the girl, my lad," said Cointet, slapping Petit-Claud on the knee; "and when you marry Françoise de la Haye, you will have a large number of the aristocracy of Angoulême as your clients. This understanding between us (under the rose) will open up magnificent prospects for you. Your position will be as much as any one could want; in fact, they don't ask better, I know."

"What is to be done?" Petit-Claud asked eagerly. "You have an attorney, Maître Cachan——"

"And, moreover, I shall not leave Cachan at once for you; I shall only be your client later on," said Cointet significantly. "What is to be done, do you ask, my friend? Eh! why, David Séchard's business. The poor devil has three thousand francs' worth of bills to meet; he will not meet them; you will stave off legal proceedings in such a way as to increase the expenses enormously. Don't trouble yourself; go on, pile on items. Doublon, my process-server, will act under Cachan's directions, and he will lay on like a blacksmith. A word to the wise is sufficient. Now, young man?——"

An eloquent pause followed, and the two men looked at each other.

"We have never seen each other," Cointet resumed; "I have not said a syllable to you; you know nothing about M. du Hautoy, nor about Mme. de Senonches, nor Mlle. de la Haye; only, when the time comes, two months hence, you

will propose for the young lady. If we should want to see each other, you will come here after dark. Let us have nothing in writing."

"Then you mean to ruin Séchard?" asked Petit-Claud.

"Not exactly; but he must be in jail for some time——"

"And what is the object?"

"Do you think that I am noodle enough to tell you that? If you have wit enough to find out, you will have sense enough to hold your tongue."

"Old Séchard has plenty of money," said Petit-Claud. He was beginning already to enter into Boniface Cointet's notions, and foresaw a possible cause of failure.

"So long as the father lives, he will not give his son a farthing; and the old printer has no mind as yet to send in an order for his funeral cards."

"Agreed!" said Petit-Claud, promptly making up his mind. "I don't ask you for guarantees; I am an attorney. If any one plays me a trick, there will be an account to settle between us."

"The rogue will go far," thought Cointet; he bade Petit-Claud good-morning.

The day after this conference was the 30th of April, and the Cointets presented the first of the three bills forged by Lucien. Unluckily, the bill was brought to poor Mme. Séchard; and she, seeing at once that the signature was not in her husband's handwriting, sent for David and asked him point-blank:

"You did not put your name to that bill, did you?"

"No," said he; "your brother was so pressed for time that he signed for me."

Eve returned the bill to the bank messenger sent by the Cointets.

"We cannot meet it," she said; then, feeling that her strength was failing, she went up to her room. David followed her.

"Go quickly to the Cointets, dear," Eve said faintly; "they will have some consideration for you; beg them to wait; and

call their attention besides to the fact that when Cérizet's lease is renewed, they will owe you a thousand francs."

David went forthwith to his enemies. Now, any foreman may become a master printer, but there are not always the makings of a good man of business in a skilled typographer; David knew very little of business; when, therefore, with a heavily-beating heart and a sensation of throttling, David had put his excuses badly enough and formulated his request, the answer—"This is nothing to do with us; the bill has been passed on to us by Métivier; Métivier will pay us. Apply to M. Métivier"—cut him short at once.

"Oh!" cried Eve when she heard the result, "as soon as the bill is returned to M. Métivier, we may be easy."

At two o'clock the next day, Victor-Ange-Herménégilde Doublon, bailiff, made protest for non-payment at two o'clock, a time when the Place du Mûrier is full of people; so that though Doublon was careful to stand and chat at the back door with Marion and Kolb, the news of the protest was known all over the business world of Angoulême that evening. Tall Cointet had enjoined it upon Master Doublon to show the Séchards the greatest consideration; but when all was said and done, could the bailiff's hypocritical regard for appearances save Eve and David from the disgrace of a suspension of payment? Let each judge for himself. A tolerably long digression of this kind will seem all too short; and ninety out of every hundred readers shall seize with avidity upon details that possess all the piquancy of novelty, thus establishing yet once again the truth of the well-known axiom, that there is nothing so little known as that which everybody is supposed to know—the Law of the Land, to wit.

And of a truth, for the immense majority of Frenchmen, a minute description of some part of the machinery of banking will be as interesting as any chapter of foreign travel. When a tradesman living in one town gives a bill to another tradesman elsewhere (as David was supposed to have done for Lucien's benefit), the transaction ceases to be a simple promissory note, given in the way of business by one tradesman

to another in the same place, and becomes in some sort a letter of exchange. When, therefore, Métivier accepted Lucien's three bills, he was obliged to send them for collection to his correspondents in Angoulême—to Cointet Brothers, that is to say. Hence, likewise, a certain initial loss for Lucien in enchange on Angoulême, taking the practical shape of an abatement of so much per cent over and above the discount. In this way Séchard's bills had passed into circulation in the bank. You would not believe how greatly the quality of banker, united with the august title of creditor, changes the debtor's position. For instance, when a bill has been passed through the bank (please note that expression), and transferred from the money market in Paris to the financial world of Angoulême, if that bill is protested, then the bankers in Angoulême must draw up a detailed account of the expenses of protest and return; 'tis a duty which they owe to themselves. Joking apart, no account of the most romantic adventure could be more mildly improbable than this of the journey made by a bill. Behold a certain article in the Code of commerce authorizing the most ingenious pleasantries after Mascarille's manner, and the interpretation thereof shall make apparent manifold atrocities lurking beneath the formidable word "legal."

Master Doublon registered the protest and went himself with it to MM. Cointet Brothers. The firm had a standing account with their bailiff; he gave them six months' credit; and the lynxes of Angoulême practically took a twelvemonth, though tall Cointet would say month by month to the lynxes' jackal, "Do you want any money, Doublon?" Nor was this all. Doublon gave the influential house a rebate upon every transaction; it was the merest trifle, one franc fifty centimes on a protest, for instance.

Tall Cointet quietly sat himself down at his desk and took out a small sheet of paper with a thirty-five centime stamp upon it, chatting as he did so with Doublon as to the standing of some of the local tradesmen.

"Well, are you satisfied with young Gannerac?"

"He is not doing badly. Lord, a carrier drives a trade——"

"Drives a trade, yes; but, as a matter of fact, his expenses are a heavy pull on him; his wife spends a good deal, so they tell me——"

"Of *his* money?" asked Doublon, with a knowing look.

The lynx meanwhile had finished ruling his sheet of paper, and now proceeded to trace the ominous words at the head of the following account in bold characters:—

ACCOUNT OF EXPENSES OF PROTEST AND RETURN.

To one bill for one thousand francs, *bearing date of February the tenth, eighteen hundred and twenty-two, drawn by* Séchard junior *of Angoulême, to order of* Lucien Chardon, *otherwise* de Rubempré, *endorsed to order of* Métivier, *and finally to our order, matured the thirtieth of April last, protested by* Doublon, *process-server, on the first of May, eighteen hundred and twenty-two.*

	fr.	*c.*
Principal	1000	—
Expenses of Protest..................	12	35
Bank charges, one-half per cent.......	5	—
Brokerage, one-quarter per cent.......	2	50
Stamp on re-draft and present account.	1	35
Interest and postage..................	3	—
	1024	20
Exchange at the rate of one and a quarter per cent on 1024 *fr.* 20 *c.*........	13	25
Total	1037	45

One thousand and thirty-seven francs forty-five centimes, for which we repay ourselves by our draft at sight upon M. Métivier, Rue Serpente, Paris, payable to order of M. Gannerac of L'Houmeau.

ANGOULÊME, *May* 2, 1822. COINTET BROTHERS.

At the foot of this little memorandum, drafted with the ease that comes of long practice (for the writer chatted with Doublon as he wrote), there appeared the subjoined form of declaration:—

"We, the undersigned, Postel of L'Houmeau, pharmaceutical chemist, and Gannerac, forwarding agent, merchant of this town, hereby certify that the present rate of exchange on Paris is one and a quarter per cent.

"ANGOULÊME, *May* 2, 1822."

"Here, Doublon, be so good as to step round and ask Postel and Gannerac to put their names to this declaration, and bring it back with you to-morrow morning."

And Doublon, quite accustomed as he was to these instruments of torture, forthwith went, as if it were the simplest thing in the world. Evidently the protest might have been sent in an envelope, as in Paris, and even so all Angoulême was sure to hear of the poor Séchards' unlucky predicament. How they all blamed his want of business energy! His excessive fondness for his wife had been the ruin of him, according to some; others maintained that it was his affection for his brother-in-law; and what shocking conclusions did they not draw from these premises! A man ought never to embrace the interests of his kith and kin. Old Séchard's hard-hearted conduct met with approval, and people admired him for his treatment of his son!

And now, all you who for any reason whatsoever should forget to "honor your engagements," look well into the methods of the banking business, by which one thousand francs may be made to pay interest at the rate of twenty-eight francs in ten minutes, without breaking the law of the land.

The thousand francs, the one incontestable item in the account, comes first.

The second item is shared between the bailiff and the Inland Revenue Department. The six francs due to the State for providing a piece of stamped paper, and putting the debtor's

mortification on record, will probably ensure a long life to this abuse; and as you already know, one franc fifty centimes from this item found its way into the banker's pockets in the shape of Doublon's rebate.

"Bank charges one-half per cent," runs the third item, which appears upon the ingenious plea that if a banker has not received payment, he has for all practical purposes discounted a bill. And although the contrary may be the case, if you fail to receive a thousand francs, it seems to be very much the same thing as if you had paid them away. Everybody who has discounted a bill knows that he has to pay more than the six per cent fixed by the law; for a small percentage appears under the humble title of "charges," representing a premium on the financial genius and skill with which the capitalist puts his money out to interest. The more money he makes out of you, the more he asks. Wherefore it would be undoubtedly cheaper to discount a bill with a fool, if fools there be in the profession of bill-discounting.

The law requires the banker to obtain a stock-broker's certificate for the rate of exchange. When a place is so unlucky as to boast no stock exchange, two merchants act instead. This is the significance of the item "brokerage;" it is a fixed charge of a quarter per cent on the amount of the protested bill. The custom is to consider the amount as paid to the merchants who act for the stock-broker, and the banker quietly puts the money into his cash-box. So much for the third item in this delightful account.

The fourth includes the cost of the piece of stamped paper on which the account itself appears, as well as the cost of the stamp for the re-draft, as it is ingeniously named, viz., the banker's draft upon his colleague in Paris.

The fifth is a charge for postage and the legal interest due upon the amount for the time that it may happen to be absent from the banker's strong box.

The final item, the exchange, is the object for which the bank exists, which is to say, for the transmission of sums of money from one place to another.

Now, sift this account thoroughly, and what do you find? The method of calculation closely resembles Polichinelle's arithmetic in Lablache's Neapolitan song, "fifteen and five make twenty-two." The signatures of Messieurs Postel and Gannerac were obviously given to oblige in the way of business; the Cointets would act at need for Gannerac as Gannerac acted for the Cointets. It was a practical application of the well-known proverb, "Reach me the rhubarb and I will pass you the senna." Cointet Brothers, moreover, kept a standing account with Métivier; there was no need of a re-draft, and no re-draft was made. A returned bill between the two firms simply meant a debit or credit entry and another line in a ledger.

This highly-colored account, therefore, is reduced to the one thousand francs, with an additional thirteen francs for expenses of protest, and half per cent for a month's delay, one thousand and eighteen francs it may be in all.

Suppose that in a large banking-house a bill for a thousand francs is daily protested on an average, then the banker receives twenty-eight francs a day by the grace of God and the constitution of the banking system, that all-powerful invention due to the Jewish intellect of the Middle Ages, which after six centuries still controls monarchs and peoples. In other words, a thousand francs would bring such a house twenty-eight francs per day, or ten thousand two hundred and twenty francs per annum. Triple the average of protests, and consequently of expenses, and you shall derive an income of thirty thousand francs per annum, interest upon purely fictitious capital. For which reason, nothing is more lovingly cultivated than these little "accounts of expenses."

If David Séchard had come to pay his bill on the 3rd of May, that is, the day after it was protested, MM. Cointet Brothers would have met him at once with, "We have returned your bill to M. Métivier," although, as a matter of fact, the document would have still been lying upon the desk. A banker has a right to make out the account of expenses on the evening of the day when the bill is protested, and

he uses the right to "sweat the silver crowns," in the country banker's phrase.

The Kellers, with correspondents all over the world, make twenty thousand francs per annum by charges for postage alone; accounts of expenses of protest pay for Mme. le Baronne de Nucingen's dresses, opera box, and carriage. The charge for postage is a more shocking swindle, because a house will settle ten matters of business in as many lines of a single letter. And of the tithe wrung from misfortune, the Government, strange to say! takes its share, and the national revenue is swelled by a tax on commercial failure. And the Bank? from the august height of a counting-house she flings an observation, full of commonsense, at the debtor, "How is it?" asks she, "that you cannot meet your bill?" and, unluckily, there is no reply to the question. Wherefore, the "account of expenses" is an account bristling with dreadful fictions, fit to cause any debtor, who henceforth shall reflect upon this instructive page, a salutary shudder.

On the 4th of May, Métivier received the account from Cointet Brothers, with instructions to proceed against M. Lucien Chardon, otherwise de Rubempré, with the utmost rigor of the law.

Eve also wrote to M. Métivier, and a few days later received an answer which reassured her completely:—

To M. Séchard, Junior, Printer, Angoulême.

"I have duly received your esteemed favor of the 5th instant. From your explanation of the bill due on April 30th, I understand that you have obliged your brother-in-law, M. de Rubempré, who is spending so much that it will be doing you a service to summons him. His present position is such that he is not likely to delay payment for long. If your brother-in-law should refuse payment, I shall rely upon the credit of your old-established house.—I sign myself now, as ever, your obedient servant,

"MÉTIVIER.

"Well," said Eve, commenting upon the letter to David, "Lucien will know when they summons him that we could not pay."

What a change wrought in Eve those few words meant! The love that grew deeper as she came to know her husband's character better and better, was taking the place of love for her brother in her heart. But to how many illusions had she not bade farewell?

And now let us trace out the whole history of the bill and the account of expenses in the business world of Paris. The law enacts that the third holder, the technical expression for the third party into whose hands the bill passes, is at liberty to proceed for the whole amount against any one of the various endorsers who appears to him to be most likely to make prompt payment. M. Métivier, using this discretion, served a summons upon Lucien. Behold the successive stages of the proceedings, all of them perfectly futile. Métivier, with the Cointets behind him, knew that Lucien was not in a position to pay, but insolvency in fact is not insolvency in law until it has been formally proved.

Formal proof of Lucien's inability to pay was obtained in the following manner:

On the 5th of May, Métivier's process-server gave Lucien notice of the protest and an account of the expense thereof, and summoned him to appear before the Tribunal of Commerce, or County Court, of Paris, to hear a vast number of things: this, among others, that he was liable to imprisonment as a merchant. By the time that Lucien, hard pressed and hunted down on all sides, read this jargon, he received notice of judgment against him by default. Coralie, his mistress, ignorant of the whole matter, imagined that Lucien had obliged his brother-in-law, and handed him all the documents together—too late. An actress sees so much of bailiffs, duns, and writs, upon the stage, that she looks on all stamped paper as a farce.

Tears filled Lucien's eyes; he was unhappy on Séchard's account, he was ashamed of the forgery, he wished to pay,

he desired to gain time. Naturally he took counsel of his friends. But by the time Lousteau, Blondet, Bixiou, and Nathan had told the poet to snap his fingers at a court only established for tradesmen, Lucien was already in the clutches of the law. He beheld upon his door the little yellow placard which leaves its reflection on the porter's countenance, and exercises a most astringent influence upon credit; striking terror into the heart of the smallest tradesman, and freezing the blood in the veins of a poet susceptible enough to care about the bits of wood, silken rags, dyed woolen stuffs, and multifarious gimcracks entitled furniture.

When the broker's men came for Coralie's furniture, the author of the *Marguerites* fled to a friend of Bixiou's, one Desroches, a barrister, who burst out laughing at the sight of Lucien in such a state about nothing at all.

"That is nothing, my dear fellow. Do you want to gain time?"

"Yes, as much as possible."

"Very well, apply for stay of execution. Go and look up Masson, he is a solicitor in the Commercial Court, and a friend of mine. Take your documents to him. He will make a second application for you, and give notice of objection to the jurisdiction of the court. There is not the least difficulty; you are a journalist, your name is known well enough. If they summons you before a civil court, come to me about it, that will be my affair; I engage to send anybody who offers to annoy the fair Coralie about his business."

On the 28th of May, Lucien's case came on in the civil court, and judgment was given before Desroches expected it. Lucien's creditor was pushing on the proceedings against him. A second execution was put in, and again Coralie's pilasters were gilded with placards. Desroches felt rather foolish; a colleague had "caught him napping," to use his own expression. He demurred, not without reason, that the furniture belonged to Mlle. Coralie, with whom Lucien was living, and demanded an order for inquiry. Thereupon the judge referred the matter to the registrar for inquiry, the furniture

was proved to belong to the actress, and judgment was entered accordingly. Métivier appealed, and judgment was confirmed on appeal on the 30th of June.

On the 7th of August, Maître Cachan received by the coach a bulky package endorsed, "Métivier *versus* Séchard and Lucien Chardon."

The first document was a neat little bill, of which a copy (accuracy guaranteed) is here given for the reader's benefit:—

	fr.	*c.*
To Bill due the last day of April, drawn by Séchard, junior, *to order of* Lucien de Rubempré, *together with expenses of protest and return*..................	1037	45
May 5*th—Serving notice of protest and summons to appear before the Tribunal of Commerce in Paris, May 7th*.............	8	75
" 7*th—Judgment by default and warrant of arrest*...............	35	—
" 10*th—Notification of judgment*......	8	50
" 12*th—Warrant of execution*..........	5	50
" 14*th—Inventory and appraisement previous to execution*........	16	—
" 18*th—Expenses of affixing placards*....	15	25
" 19*th—Registration*	4	—
" 24*th—Verification of inventory, and application for stay of execution on the part of the said Lucien de Rubempré, objecting to the jurisdiction of the Court*	12	—
" 27*th—Order of the Court upon application duly repeated, and transfer of case to the Civil Court*	35	—
Carried forward........	1177	45

	fr.	c.
Brought forward........	1177	45
May 28th—Notice of summary proceedings in the Civil Court at the instance of Métivier, represented by counsel...........	6	50
June 2nd—Judgment, after hearing both parties, condemning Lucien for expenses of protest and return; the plaintiff to bear costs of proceedings in the Commercial Court..........	150	—
" 6*th—Notification of judgment.......*	10	—
" 15*th—Warrant of execution..........*	5	50
" 19*th—Inventory and appraisement preparatory to execution; interpleader summons by the Demoiselle Coralie, claiming goods and chattels taken in execution; demand for immediate special inquiry before further proceedings be taken..*	20	—
" " *—Judge's order referring matter to registrar for immediate special inquiry..............*	40	—
" " *—Judgment in favor of the said Mademoiselle Coralie........*	250	—
" *20th—Appeal by Métivier............*	17	—
" *30th—Confirmation of judgment......*	250	—
Total	1926	45

	fr.	c.
Bill matured May 31st, with expenses of protest and return..................	1037	45
Serving notice of protest................	8	75
Total	1046	20

Bill matured June 30th, with expenses of protest and return..................	1037	45
Serving notice of protest..................	8	75
Total	1046	20

This document was accompanied by a letter from Métivier, instructing Maître Cachan, notary of Angoulême, to prosecute David Séchard with the utmost rigor of the law. Wherefore Maître Victor-Ange-Herménégilde Doublon summoned David Séchard before the Tribunal of Commerce in Angoulême for the sum-total of four thousand and eighteen francs eighty-five centimes, the amount of the three bills and expenses already incurred. On the morning of the very day when Doublon served the writ upon Eve, requiring her to pay a sum so enormous in her eyes, there came a letter like a thunderbolt from Métivier:—

To Monsieur Séchard, Junior, Printer, Angoulême.

"Sir,—Your brother-in-law, M. Chardon, is so shamelessly dishonest, that he declares his furniture to be the property of an actress with whom he is living. You ought to have informed me candidly of these circumstances, and not have allowed me to go to useless expense over law proceedings. I have received no answer to my letter of the 10th of May last. You must not, therefore, take it amiss if I ask for immediate repayment of the three bills and the expenses to which I have been put.—Yours, etc.,

"Métivier."

Eve had heard nothing during these months, and supposed, in her ignorance of commercial law, that her brother had made reparation for his sins by meeting the forged bills.

"Be quick, and go at once to Petit-Claud, dear," she said; "tell him about it, and ask his advice."

David hurried to his schoolfellow's office.

"When you came to tell me of your appointment and offered me your services, I did not think that I should need them so soon," he said.

Petit-Claud studied the fine face of this man who sat opposite him in the office chair, and scarcely listened to the details of the case, for he knew more of them already than the speaker. As soon as he saw Séchard's anxiety, he said to himself, "The trick has succeeded."

This kind of comedy is often played in an attorney's office. "Why are the Cointets persecuting him?" Petit-Claud wondered within himself, for the attorney can use his wit to read his clients' thoughts as clearly as the ideas of their opponents, and it is his business to see both sides of the judicial web.

"You want to gain time," he said at last, when Séchard had come to an end. "How long do you want? Something like three or four months?"

"Oh! four months! that would be my salvation," exclaimed David. Petit-Claud appeared to him as an angel.

"Very well. No one shall lay hands on any of your furniture, and no one shall arrest you for four months——But it will cost you a good deal," said Petit-Claud.

"Eh! what does that matter to me?" cried Séchard.

"You are expecting some money to come in; but are you sure of it?" asked Petit-Claud, astonished at the way in which his client walked into the toils.

"In three months' time I shall have plenty of money," said the inventor, with an inventor's hopeful confidence.

"Your father is still above ground," suggested Petit-Claud; "he is in no hurry to leave his vines."

"Do you think that I am counting on my father's death?" returned David. "I am on the track of a trade secret, the secret of making a sheet of paper as strong as Dutch paper, without a thread of cotton in it, and at a cost of fifty per cent less than cotton pulp."

"There is a fortune in that!" exclaimed Petit-Claud. He knew now what the tall Cointet meant.

"A large fortune, my friend, for in ten years' time the demand for paper will be ten times larger than it is to-day. Journalism will be the craze of our day."

"Nobody knows your secret?"

"Nobody except my wife."

"You have not told any one what you mean to do—the Cointets, for example?"

"I did say something about it, but in general terms, I think."

A sudden spark of generosity flashed through Petit-Claud's rancorous soul; he tried to reconcile Séchard's interests with the Cointets' projects and his own.

"Listen, David, we are old schoolfellows, you and I; I will fight your case; but understand this clearly—the defence, in the teeth of the law, will cost you five or six thousand francs! Do not compromise your prospects. I think you will be compelled to share the profits of your invention with some one of our paper manufacturers. Let us see now. You will think twice before you buy or build a paper mill; and there is the cost of the patent besides. All this means time, and money too. The servers of writs will be down upon you too soon, perhaps, although we are going to give them the slip——"

"I have my secret," said David, with the simplicity of the man of books.

"Well and good, your secret will be your plank of safety," said Petit-Claud; his first loyal intention of avoiding a lawsuit by a compromise was frustrated. "I do not wish to know it; but mind this that I tell you. Work in the bowels of the earth if you can, so that no one may watch you and gain a hint from your ways of working, or your plank will be stolen from under your feet. An inventor and a simpleton often live in the same skin. Your mind runs so much on your secrets that you cannot think of everything. People will begin to have their suspicions at last, and the place is full of paper manufacturers. So many manufacturers, so many enemies for you! You are like a beaver with the hunters about you; do not give them your skin——"

"Thank you, dear fellow, I have told myself all this," exclaimed Séchard, "but I am obliged to you for showing so much concern for me and for your forethought. It does not really matter to me myself. An income of twelve hundred francs would be enough for me, and my father ought by rights to leave me three times as much some day. Love and thought make up my life—a divine life. I am working for Lucien's sake and for my wife's."

"Come, give me this power of attorney, and think of nothing but your discovery. If there should be any danger of arrest, I will let you know in time, for we must think of all possibilities. And let me tell you again to allow no one of whom you are not so sure as you are of yourself to come into your place."

"Cérizet did not care to continue the lease of the plant and premises, hence our little money difficulties. We have no one at home now but Marion and Kolb, an Alsacien as trusty as a dog, and my wife and her mother——"

"One word," said Petit-Claud, "don't trust that dog——"

"You do not know him," exclaimed David; "he is like a second self."

"May I try him?"

"Yes," said Séchard.

"There, good-bye, but send Mme. Séchard to me; I must have a power of attorney from your wife. And bear in mind, my friend, that there is a fire burning in your affairs," said Petit-Claud, by way of warning of all the troubles gathering in the law courts to burst upon David's head.

"Here am I with one foot in Burgundy and the other in Champagne," he added to himself as he closed the office door on David.

Harassed by money difficulties, beset with fears for his wife's health, stung to the quick by Lucien's disgrace, David had worked on at his problem. He had been trying to find a single process to replace the various operations of pounding and maceration to which all flax or cotton or rags, any vege-

table fibre, in fact, must be subjected; and as he went to Petit-Claud's office, he abstractedly chewed a bit of nettle stalk that had been steeping in water. On his way home, tolerably satisfied with his interview, he felt a little pellet sticking between his teeth. He laid it on his hand, flattened it out, and saw that the pulp was far superior to any previous result. The want of cohesion is the great drawback of all vegetable fibre; straw, for instance, yields a very brittle paper, which may almost be called metallic and resonant. These chances only befall bold inquirers into Nature's methods!

"Now," said he to himself, "I must contrive to do by machinery and some chemical agency the thing that I myself have done unconsciously."

When his wife saw him, his face was radiant with belief in victory. There were traces of tears in Eve's face.

"Oh! my darling, do not trouble yourself; Petit-Claud will guarantee that we shall not be molested for several months to come. There will be a good deal of expense over it; but, as Petit-Claud said when he came to the door with me, 'A Frenchman has a right to keep his creditors waiting, provided he repays them capital, interest, and costs.'—Very well, then, we shall do that——"

"And live meanwhile?" asked poor Eve, who thought of everything.

"Ah! that is true," said David, carrying his hand to his ear after the unaccountable fashion of most perplexed mortals.

"Mother will look after little Lucien, and I can go back to work again," said she.

"Eve! oh, my Eve!" cried David, holding his wife closely to him.—"At Saintes, not very far from here, in the sixteenth century, there lived one of the very greatest of Frenchmen, for he was not merely the inventor of glaze, he was the glorious precursor of Buffon and Cuvier besides; he was the first geologist, good, simple soul that he was. Bernard Palissy endured the martyrdom appointed for all seekers into secrets, but his wife and children and all his neighbors were against him. His wife used to sell his tools; nobody understood him,

he wandered about the countryside, he was hunted down, they jeered at him. But I—am loved——"

"Dearly loved!" said Eve, with the quiet serenity of the love that is sure of itself.

"And so may well endure all that poor Bernard Palissy suffered—Bernard Palissy, the discoverer of Écouen ware, the Huguenot excepted by Charles IX. on the day of Saint-Bartholomew. He lived to be rich and honored in his old age, and lectured on the 'Science of Earths,' as he called it, in the face of Europe."

"So long as my fingers can hold an iron, you shall want for nothing," cried the poor wife, in tones that told of the deepest devotion. "When I was Mme. Prieur's forewoman I had a friend among the girls, Basine Clerget, a cousin of Postel's, a very good child; well, Basine told me the other day when she brought back the linen, that she was taking Mme. Prieur's business; I will work for her."

"Ah! you shall not work there for long," said David; "I have found out——"

Eve, watching his face, saw the sublime belief in success which sustains the inventor, the belief that gives him courage to go forth into the virgin forests of the country of Discovery; and, for the first time in her life, she answered that confident look with a half-sad smile. David bent his head mournfully.

"Oh! my dear! I am not laughing! I did not doubt! It was not a sneer!" cried Eve, on her knees before her husband. "But I see plainly now that you were right to tell me nothing about your experiments and your hopes. Ah! yes, dear, an inventor should endure the long painful travail of a great idea alone, he should not utter a word of it even to his wife. . . . A woman is a woman still. This Eve of yours could not help smiling when she heard you say, 'I have found out,' for the seventeenth time this month."

David burst out laughing so heartily at his own expense that Eve caught his hand in hers and kissed it reverently. It was a delicious moment for them both, one of those roses of love and tenderness that grow beside the desert paths of the bitterest poverty, nay, at times in yet darker depths.

As the storm of misfortune grew, Eve's courage redoubled; the greatness of her husband's nature, his inventor's simplicity, the tears that now and again she saw in the eyes of this dreamer of dreams with the tender heart,—all these things aroused in her an unsuspected energy of resistance. Once again she tried the plan that had succeeded so well already. She wrote to M. Métivier, reminding him that the printing office was for sale, offered to pay him out of the proceeds, and begged him not to ruin David with needless costs. Métivier received the heroic letter, and shammed dead. His head-clerk replied that in the absence of M. Métivier he could not take it upon himself to stay proceedings, for his employer had made it a rule to let the law take its course. Eve wrote again, offering this time to renew the bills and pay all the costs hitherto incurred. To this the clerk consented, provided that Séchard senior guaranteed payment. So Eve walked over to Marsac, taking Kolb and her mother with her. She braved the old vinedresser, and so charming was she, that the old man's face relaxed, and the puckers smoothed out at the sight of her; but when, with inward quakings, she came to speak of a guarantee, she beheld a sudden and complete change of the tippleographic countenance.

"If I allowed my son to put his hand to the lips of my cash box whenever he had a mind, he would plunge it deep into the vitals, he would take all I have!" cried old Séchard. "That is the way with children; they eat up their parents' purse. What did I do myself, eh? *I* never cost my parents a farthing. Your printing office is standing idle. The rats and the mice do all the printing that is done in it. . . . You have a pretty face; I am very fond of you; you are a careful, hard-working woman; but that son of mine!—Do you know what David is? I'll tell you—he is a scholar that will never do a stroke of work! If I had reared him, as I was reared myself, without knowing his letters, and if I had made a 'bear' of him, like his father before him, he would have money saved and put out at interest by now. . . . Oh! he is my cross, that fellow is, look you! And, unluckily, he is

all the family I have, for there is never like to be a later edition. And then he makes you unhappy——"

Eve protested with a vehement gesture of denial.

"Yes, he does," affirmed old Séchard; "you had to find a wet-nurse for the child. Come, come, I know all about it, you are in the county court, and the whole town is talking about you. I was only a 'bear,' *I* have no book learning, *I* was not foreman at the Didots', the first printers in the world; but yet I never set eyes on a bit of stamped paper. Do you know what I say to myself as I go to and fro among my vines, looking after them and getting in my vintage, and doing my bits of business?—I say to myself, 'You are taking a lot of trouble, poor old chap; working to pile one silver crown on another, you will leave a fine property behind you, and the bailiffs and the lawyers will get it all; . . . or else it will go in nonsensical notions and crotchets.'—Look you here, child; you are the mother of yonder little lad; it seemed to me as I held him at the font with Mme. Chardon that I could see his old grandfather's copper nose on his face; very well, think less of Séchard and more of that little rascal. I can trust no one but you; you will prevent him from squandering my property—my poor property."

"But, dear papa Séchard, your son will be a credit to you, you will see; he will make money and be a rich man one of these days, and wear the Cross of the Legion of Honor at his buttonhole."

"What is he going to do to get it?"

"You will see. But, meanwhile, would a thousand crowns ruin you? A thousand crowns would put an end to the proceedings. Well, if you cannot trust him, lend the money to me; I will pay it back; you could make it a charge on my portion, on my earnings——"

"Then has some one brought David into a court of law?" cried the vinedresser, amazed to find that the gossip was really true. "See what comes of knowing how to write your name! And how about my rent! Oh! little girl, I must go to Angoulême at once and ask Cachan's advice, and see that I am

straight. You did right well to come over. Forewarned is forearmed."

After two hours of argument Eve was fain to go, defeated by the unanswerable *dictum,* "Women never understand business." She had come with a faint hope, she went back again almost heartbroken, and reached home just in time to receive notice of judgment; Séchard must pay Métivier in full. The appearance of a bailiff at a house door is an event in a country town, and Doublon had come far too often of late. The whole neighborhood was talking about the Séchards. Eve dared not leave her house; she dreaded to hear the whispers as she passed.

"Oh! my brother, my brother!" cried poor Eve, as she hurried into the passage and up the stairs, "I can never forgive you, unless it was——"

"Alas! it was that, or suicide," said David, who had followed her.

"Let us say no more about it," she said quietly. "The woman who dragged him down into the depths of Paris has much to answer for; and your father, my David, is quite inexorable! Let us bear it in silence."

A discreet rapping at the door cut short some word of love on David's lips. Marion appeared, towing the big, burly Kolb after her across the outer room.

"Madame," said Marion, "we have known, Kolb and I, that you and the master were very much put about; and as we have eleven hundred francs of savings between us, we thought we could not do better than put them in the mistress' hands——"

"Die misdress," echoed Kolb fervently.

"Kolb," cried David, "you and I will never part. Pay a thousand francs on account to Maître Cachan, and take a receipt for it; we will keep the rest. And, Kolb, no power on earth must extract a word from you as to my work, or my absences from home, or the things you may see me bring back; and if I send you to look for plants for me, you know, no human being must set eyes on you. They will try to corrupt

you, my good Kolb; they will offer you thousands, perhaps tens of thousands of francs, to tell——"

"Dey may offer me millions," cried Kolb, "but not ein vort from me shall dey traw. Haf I not peen in der army, and know my orders?"

"Well, you are warned. March, and ask M. Petit-Claud to go with you as witness."

"Yes," said the Alsacien. "Some tay I hope to be rich enough to dust der chacket of dat man of law. I don't like his gountenance."

"Kolb is a good man, madame," said big Marion; "he is as strong as a Turk, and as meek as a lamb. Just the one that would make a woman happy. It was his notion, too, to invest our savings this way—'safings,' as he calls them. Poor man, if he doesn't speak right, he thinks right, and I understand him all the same. He has a notion of working for somebody else, so as to save us his keep——"

"Surely we shall be rich, if it is only to repay these good folk," said David, looking at his wife.

Eve thought it quite simple; it was no surprise to her to find other natures on a level with her own. The dullest—nay, the most indifferent—observer could have seen all the beauty of her nature in her way of receiving this service.

"You will be rich some day, dear master," said Marion; "your bread is ready baked. Your father has just bought another farm, he is putting by money for you; that he is."

And under the circumstances, did not Marion show an exquisite delicacy of feeling by belittling, as it were, her kindness in this way?

French procedure, like all things human, has its defects; nevertheless, the sword of justice, being a two-edged weapon, is excellently adapted alike for attack or defence. Procedure, moreover, has its amusing side; for when opposed, lawyers arrive at an understanding, as they well may do, without exchanging a word, through their manner of conducting their case, a suit becomes a kind of war waged on the lines laid down by the first Marshal Biron, who, at the siege of Rouen, it may

be remembered, received his son's project for taking the city in two days with the remark, "You must be in a great hurry to go and plant cabbages!" Let two commanders-in-chief spare their troops as much as possible, let them imitate the Austrian generals who give the men time to eat their soup though they fail to effect a juncture, and escape reprimand from the Aulic Council; let them avoid all decisive measures, and they shall carry on a war for ever. Maître Cachan, Petit-Claud, and Doublon, did better than the Austrian generals; they took for their example Quintus Fabius Cunctator—the Austrian of antiquity.

Petit-Claud, malignant as a mule, was not long in finding out all the advantages of his position. No sooner had Boniface Cointet guaranteed his costs than he vowed to lead Cachan a dance, and to dazzle the paper manufacturer with a brilliant display of genius in the creation of items to be charged to Métivier. Unluckily for the fame of the young forensic Figaro, the writer of this history is obliged to pass over the scene of his exploits in as great a hurry as if he trod on burning coals; but a single bill of costs, in the shape of the specimen sent from Paris, will no doubt suffice for the student of contemporary manners. Let us follow the example set us by the Bulletins of the Grande Armée, and give a summary of Petit-Claud's valiant feats and exploits in the province of pure law; they will be the better appreciated for concise treatment.

David Séchard was summoned before the Tribunal of Commerce at Angoulême for the 3rd of July, made default, and notice of judgment was served on the 8th. On the 10th, Doublon obtained an execution warrant, and attempted to put in an execution on the 12th. On this Petit-Claud applied for an interpleader summons, and served notice on Métivier for that day fortnight. Métivier made application for a hearing without delay, and on the 19th, Séchard's application was dismissed. Hard upon this followed notice of judgment, authorizing the issue of an execution warrant on the 22nd, a warrant of arrest on the 23rd, and bailiff's inventory previous

to the execution on the 24th. Métivier, Doublon, Cachan & Company were proceeding at this furious pace, when Petit-Claud suddenly pulled them up, and stayed execution by lodging notice of appeal to the Court-Royal. Notice of appeal, duly reiterated on the 25th of July, drew Métivier off to Poitiers.

"Come!" said Petit-Claud to himself, "there we are likely to stop for some time to come."

No sooner was the storm passed over to Poitiers, and an attorney practising in the Court-Royal instructed to defend the case, than Petit-Claud, a champion facing both ways, made application in Mme. Séchard's name for the immediate separation of her estate from her husband's; using "all diligence" (in legal language) to such purpose, that he obtained an order from the court on the 28th, and inserted notice at once in the *Charente Courier*. Now David the lover had settled ten thousand francs upon his wife in the marriage contract, making over to her as security the fixtures of the printing office and the household furniture; and Petit-Claud therefore constituted Mme. Séchard her husband's creditor for that small amount, drawing up a statement of her claims on the estate in the presence of a notary on the 1st of August.

While Petit-Claud was busy securing the household property of his clients, he gained the day at Poitiers on the point of law on which the demurrer and appeals were based. He held that, as the Court of the Seine had ordered the plaintiff to pay costs of proceedings in the Paris commercial court, David was so much the less liable for expenses of litigation incurred upon Lucien's account. The Court-Royal took this view of the case, and judgment was entered accordingly. David Séchard was ordered to pay the amount in dispute in the Angoulême Court, less the law expenses incurred in Paris; these Métivier must pay, and each side must bear its own costs in the appeal to the Court-Royal.

David Séchard was duly notified of the result on the 17th of August. On the 18th the judgment took the practical shape of an order to pay capital, interest, and costs, followed

up by notice of an execution for the morrow. Upon this Petit-Claud intervened and put in a claim for the furniture as the wife's property duly separated from her husband's; and what was more, Petit-Claud produced Séchard senior upon the scene of action. The old vinegrower had become his client on this wise. He came to Angoulême on the day after Eve's visit, and went to Maître Cachan for advice. His son owed him arrears of rent; how could he come by his rent in the scrimmage in which his son was engaged?

"I am engaged by the other side," pronounced Cachan, "and I cannot appear for the father when I am suing the son; but go to Petit-Claud, he is very clever, he may perhaps do even better for you than I should do."

Cachan and Petit-Claud met at the Court.

"I have sent you Séchard senior," said Cachan; "take the case for me in exchange." Lawyers do each other services of this kind in country towns as well as in Paris.

The day after Séchard senior gave Petit-Claud his confidence, the tall Cointet paid a visit to his confederate.

"Try to give old Séchard a lesson," he said. "He is the kind of man that will never forgive his son for costing him a thousand francs or so; the outlay will dry up any generous thoughts in his mind, if he ever has any."

"Go back to your vines," said Petit-Claud to his new client. "Your son is not very well off; do not eat him out of house and home. I will send for you when the time comes."

On behalf of Séchard senior, therefore, Petit-Claud claimed that the presses, being fixtures, were so much the more to be regarded as tools and implements of trade, and the less liable to seizure, in that the house had been a printing office since the reign of Louis XIV. Cachan, on Métivier's account, waxed indignant at this. In Paris Lucien's furniture had belonged to Coralie, and here again in Angoulême David's goods and chattels all belonged to his wife or his father; pretty things were said in court. Father and son were summoned; such claims could not be allowed to stand.

"We mean to unmask the frauds intrenched behind bad faith of the most formidable kind; here is the defence of dishonesty bristling with the plainest and most innocent articles of the Code, and why?—to avoid repayment of three thousand francs; obtained how?—from poor Métivier's cash box! And yet there are those who dare to say a word against bill-discounters! What times we live in! . . . Now, I put it to you—what is this but taking your neighbor's money? . . . You will not surely sanction a claim which would bring immorality to the very core of justice!"

Cachan's eloquence produced an effect on the court. A divided judgment was given in favor of Mme. Séchard, the house furniture being held to be her property; and against Séchard senior, who was ordered to pay costs—four hundred and thirty-four francs, sixty-five centimes.

"It is kind of old Séchard," laughed the lawyers; "he would have a finger in the pie, so let him pay!"

Notice of judgment was given on the 26th of August; the presses and plant could be seized on the 28th. Placards were posted. Application was made for an order empowering them to sell on the spot. Announcements of the sale appeared in the papers, and Doublon flattered himself that the inventory should be verified and the auction take place on the 2nd of September.

By this time David Séchard owed Métivier five thousand two hundred and seventy-five francs, twenty-five centimes (to say nothing of interest), by formal judgment confirmed by appeal, the bill of costs having been duly taxed. Likewise to Petit-Claud he owed twelve hundred francs, exclusive of the fees, which were left to David's generosity with the generous confidence displayed by the hackney coachman who has driven you so quickly over the road on which you desire to go.

Mme. Séchard owed Petit-Claud something like three hundred and fifty francs and fees besides; and of old Séchard, besides four hundred and thirty-four francs, sixty-five centimes, the little attorney demanded a hundred crowns by way of fee. Altogether, the Séchard family owed about ten thou-

sand francs. This is what is called "putting fire into the bed straw."

Apart from the utility of these documents to other nations who thus may behold the battery of French law in action, the French legislator ought to know the lengths to which the abuse of procedure may be carried, always supposing that the said legislator can find time for reading. Surely some sort of regulation might be devised, some way of forbidding lawyers to carry on a case until the sum in dispute is more than eaten up in costs? Is there not something ludicrous in the idea of submitting a square yard of soil and an estate of thousands of acres to the same legal formalities? These bare outlines of the history of the various stages of procedure should open the eyes of Frenchmen to the meaning of the words "legal formalities, justice, and costs," little as the immense majority of the nation know about them.

Five thousand pounds' weight of type in the printing office were worth two thousand francs as old metal; the three presses were valued at six hundred francs; the rest of the plant would fetch the price of old iron and firewood. The household furniture would have brought in a thousand francs at most. The whole personal property of Séchard junior therefore represented the sum of four thousand francs; and Cachan and Petit-Claud made claims for seven thousand francs in costs already incurred, to say nothing of expenses to come, for the blossom gave promise of fine fruits enough, as the reader will shortly see. Surely the lawyers of France and Navarre, nay, even of Normandy herself, will not refuse Petit-Claud his meed of admiration and respect? Surely, too, kind hearts will give Marion and Kolb a tear of sympathy?

All through the war Kolb sat on a chair in the doorway, acting as watch-dog, when David had nothing else for him to do. It was Kolb who received all the notifications, and a clerk of Petit-Claud's kept watch over Kolb. No sooner were the placards announcing the auction put up on the premises than Kolb tore them down; he hurried round the town after the bill-poster, tearing the placards from the walls.

"Ah, scountrels!" he cried, "to dorment so goot a man; und they calls it chustice!"

Marion made half a franc a day by working half time in a paper mill as a machine tender, and her wages contributed to the support of the household. Mme. Chardon went back uncomplainingly to her old occupation, sitting up night after night, and bringing home her wages at the end of the week. Poor Mme. Chardon! Twice already she had made a nine days' prayer for those she loved, wondering that God should be deaf to her petitions, and blind to the light of the candles on His altar.

On the 2nd of September, a letter came from Lucien, the first since the letter of the winter, which David had kept from his wife's knowledge—the announcement of the three bills which bore David's signature. This time Lucien wrote to Eve.

"The third since he left us!" she said. Poor sister, she was afraid to open the envelope that covered the fatal sheet.

She was feeding the little one when the post came in; they could not afford a wet-nurse now, and the child was being brought up by hand. Her state of mind may be imagined, and David's also, when he had been roused to read the letter, for David had been at work all night, and only lay down at daybreak.

Lucien to Eve.

"PARIS, *August 29th.*

"MY DEAR SISTER,—Two days ago, at five o'clock in the morning, one of God's noblest creatures breathed her last in my arms; she was the one woman on earth capable of loving me as you and mother and David love me, giving me besides that unselfish affection, something that neither mother nor sister can give—the utmost bliss of love. Poor Coralie, after giving up everything for my sake, may perhaps have died for me—for me, who this moment have not the wherewithal to bury her. She could have solaced my life; you, and you alone, my dear good angels, can console me for her death. God has

forgiven her, I think, the innocent girl, for she died like a Christian. Oh, this Paris! Eve, Paris is the glory and the shame of France. Many illusions I have lost here already, and I have others yet to lose, when I begin to beg for the little money needed before I can lay the body of my angel in consecrated earth.

"Your unhappy brother,

"LUCIEN."

"*P. S.* I must have given you much trouble by my heedlessness; some day you will know all, and you will forgive me. You must be quite easy now; a worthy merchant, a M. Camusot, to whom I once caused cruel pangs, promised to arrange everything, seeing that Coralie and I were so much distressed."

"The sheet is still moist with his tears," said Eve, looking at the letter with a heart so full of sympathy that something of the old love for Lucien shone in her eyes.

"Poor fellow, he must have suffered cruelly if he has been loved as he says!" exclaimed Eve's husband, happy in his love; and these two forgot all their own troubles at this cry of a supreme sorrow. Just at that moment Marion rushed in.

"Madame," she panted, "here they are! Here they are!"

"Who is here?"

"Doublon and his men, bad luck to them! Kolb will not let them come in; they have come to sell us up."

"No, no, they are not going to sell you up, never fear," cried a voice in the next room, and Petit-Claud appeared upon the scene. "I have just lodged notice of appeal. We ought not to sit down under a judgment that attaches a stigma of bad faith to us. I did not think it worth while to fight the case here. I let Cachan talk to gain time for you; I am sure of gaining the day at Poitiers——"

"But how much will it cost to win the day?" asked Mme. Séchard.

"Fees if you win, one thousand francs if we lose our case."



"Oh, dear!" cried poor Eve; "why, the remedy is worse than the disease!"

Petit-Claud was not a little confused at this cry of innocence enlightened by the progress of the flames of litigation. It struck him too that Eve was a very beautiful woman. In the middle of the discussion old Séchard arrived, summoned by Petit-Claud. The old man's presence in the chamber where his little grandson in the cradle lay smiling at misfortune completed the scene. The young attorney at once addressed the newcomer with:

"You owe me seven hundred francs for the interpleader, Papa Séchard; but you can charge the amount to your son in addition to the arrears of rent."

The vinedresser felt the sting of the sarcasm conveyed by Petit-Claud's tone and manner.

"It would have cost you less to give security for the debt at first," said Eve, leaving the cradle to greet her father-in-law with a kiss.

David, quite overcome by the sight of the crowd outside the house (for Kolb's resistance to Doublon's men had collected a knot of people), could only hold out a hand to his father; he did not say a word.

"And how, pray, do I come to owe you seven hundred francs?" the old man asked, looking at Petit-Claud.

"Why, in the first place, I am engaged by you. Your rent is in question; so, as far as I am concerned, you and your debtor are one and the same person. If your son does not pay my costs in the case, you must pay them yourself.—But this is nothing. In a few hours David will be put in prison; will you allow him to go?"

"What does he owe?"

"Something like five or six thousand francs, besides the amounts owing to you and to his wife."

The speech aroused all the old man's suspicions at once. He looked round the little blue-and-white bedroom at the touching scene before his eyes—at a beautiful woman weeping over a cradle, at David bowed down by anxieties, and then

again at the lawyer. This was a trap set for him by that lawyer; perhaps they wanted to work upon his paternal feelings, to get money out of him? That was what it all meant. He took alarm. He went over to the cradle and fondled the child, who held out both little arms to him. No heir to an English peerage could be more tenderly cared for than the little one in that house of trouble; his little embroidered cap was lined with pale pink.

"Eh! let David get out of it as best he may. I am thinking of this child here," cried the old grandfather, "and the child's mother will approve of that. David that knows so much must know how to pay his debts."

"Now I will just put your meaning into plain language," said Petit-Claud ironically. "Look here, Papa Séchard, you are jealous of your son. Hear the truth! you put David into his present position by selling the business to him for three times its value. You ruined him to make an extortionate bargain! Yes, don't you shake your head; you sold the newspaper to the Cointets and pocketed all the proceeds, and that was as much as the whole business was worth. You bear David a grudge, not merely because you have plundered him, but because, also, your own son is a man far above yourself. You profess to be prodigiously fond of your grandson, to cloak your want of feeling for your son and his wife, because you ought to pay down money *hic et nunc* for them, while you need only show a posthumous affection for your grandson. You pretend to be fond of the little fellow, lest you should be taxed with want of feeling for your own flesh and blood. That is the botton of it, Papa Séchard."

"Did you fetch me over to hear this?" asked the old man, glowering at his lawyer, his daughter-in-law, and his son in turn.

"Monsieur!" protested poor Eve, turning to Petit-Claud, "have you vowed to ruin us? My husband has never uttered a word against his father." (Here the old man looked cunningly at her.) "David has told me scores of times that you loved him in your way," she added, looking at her father-in-law, and understanding his suspicions.

Petit-Claud was only following out the tall Cointet's instructions. He was widening the breach between the father and son, lest Séchard senior should extricate David from his intolerable position. "The day that David Séchard goes to prison shall be the day of your introduction to Mme. de Senonches," the "tall Cointet" had said no longer ago than yesterday.

Mme. Séchard, with the quick insight of love, had divined Petit-Claud's mercenary hostility, even as she had once before felt instinctively that Cérizet was a traitor. As for David, his astonishment may be imagined; he could not understand how Petit-Claud came to know so much of his father's nature and his own history. Upright and honorable as he was, he did not dream of the relations between his lawyer and the Cointets; nor, for that matter, did he know that the Cointets were at work behind Métivier. Meanwhile old Séchard took his son's silence as an insult, and Petit-Claud, taking advantage of his client's bewilderment, beat a retreat.

"Good-bye, my dear David; you have had warning, notice of appeal doesn't invalidate the warrant for arrest. It is the only course left open to your creditors, and it will not be long before they take it. So, go away at once—— Or, rather, if you will take my advice, go to the Cointets and see them about it. They have capital. If your invention is perfected and answers the purpose, go into partnership with them. After all, they are very good fellows——"

"Your invention?" broke in old Séchard.

"Why, do you suppose that your son is fool enough to let his business slip away from him without thinking of something else?" exclaimed the attorney. "He is on the brink of the discovery of a way of making paper at a cost of three francs per ream, instead of ten, he tells me."

"One more dodge for taking me in! You are all as thick as thieves in a fair. If David has found out such a plan, he has no need of me—he is a millionaire! Good-bye, my dears, and a good-day to you all," and the old man disappeared down the staircase.

"Find some way of hiding yourself," was Petit-Claud's parting word to David, and with that he hurried out to exasperate old Séchard still further. He found the vinegrower growling to himself outside in the Place du Mûrier, went with him as far as L'Houmeau, and there left him with a threat of putting in an execution for the costs due to him unless they were paid before the week was out.

"I will pay you if you will show me how to disinherit my son without injuring my daughter-in-law or the boy," said old Séchard, and they parted forthwith.

"How well the 'tall Cointet' knows the folk he is dealing with! It is just as he said; those seven hundred francs will prevent the father from paying seven thousand," the little lawyer thought within himself as he climbed the path to Angoulême. "Still, that old slyboots of a paper-maker must not overreach us; it is time to ask him for something besides promises."

"Well, David dear, what do you mean to do?" asked Eve, when the lawyer had followed her father-in-law.

"Marion, put your biggest pot on the fire!" called David; "I have my secret fast."

At this Eve put on her bonnet and shawl and walking shoes with feverish haste.

"Kolb, my friend, get ready to go out," she said, "and come with me; if there is any way out of this hell, I must find it."

When Eve had gone out, Marion spoke to David. "Do be sensible, sir," she said, "or the mistress will fret herself to death. Make some money to pay off your debts, and then you can try to find treasure at your ease——"

"Don't talk, Marion," said David; "I am going to overcome my last difficulty, and then I can apply for the patent and the improvement on the patent at the same time."

This "improvement on the patent" is the curse of the French patentee. A man may spend ten years of his life in working out some obscure industrial problem; and when he has invented some piece of machinery, or made a discovery

of some kind, he takes out a patent and imagines that he has a right to his own invention; then there comes a competitor; and unless the first inventor has foreseen all possible contingencies, the second comer makes an "improvement on the patent" with a screw or a nut, and takes the whole thing out of his hands. The discovery of a cheap material for paper pulp, therefore, is by no means the conclusion of the whole matter. David Séchard was anxiously looking ahead on all sides lest the fortune sought in the teeth of such difficulties should be snatched out of his hands at the last. Dutch paper, as flax paper is still called, though it is no longer made in Holland, is slightly sized; but every sheet is sized separately by hand, and this increases the cost of production. If it were possible to discover some way of sizing the paper in the pulping-trough, with some inexpensive glue, like that in use to-day (though even now it is not quite perfect), there would be no "improvement on the patent" to fear. For the past month, accordingly, David had been making experiments in sizing pulp. He had two discoveries before him.

Eve went to see her mother. Fortunately, it so happened that Mme. Chardon was nursing the deputy-magistrate's wife, who had just given the Milauds of Nevers an heir presumptive; and Eve, in her distrust of all attorneys and notaries, took into her head to apply for advice to the legal guardian of widows and orphans. She wanted to know if she could relieve David from his embarrassments by taking them upon herself and selling her claims upon the estate, and besides, she had some hope of discovering the truth as to Petit-Claud's unaccountable conduct. The official, struck with Mme. Séchard's beauty, received her not only with the respect due to a woman, but with a sort of courtesy to which Eve was not accustomed. She saw in the magistrate's face an expression which, since her marriage, she had seen in no eyes but Kolb's; and for a beautiful woman like Eve, this expression is the criterion by which men are judged. When passion, or self-interest, or age dims that spark of unquestioning fealty that

gleams in a young man's eyes, a woman feels a certain mistrust of him, and begins to observe him critically. The Cointets, Cérizet, and Petit-Claud—all the men whom Eve felt instinctively to be her enemies—had turned hard, indifferent eyes on her; with the deputy-magistrate, therefore, she felt at ease, although, in spite of his kindly courtesy, he swept all her hopes away by his first words.

"It is not certain, madame, that the Court-Royal will reverse the judgment of the court restricting your lien on your husband's property, for payment of moneys due to you by the terms of your marriage-contract, to household goods and chattels. Your privilege ought not to be used to defraud the other creditors. But in any case, you will be allowed to take your share of the proceeds with the other creditors, and your father-in-law likewise, as a privileged creditor, for arrears of rent. When the court has given the order, other points may be raised as to the 'contribution,' as we call it, when a schedule of the debts is drawn up, and the creditors are paid a dividend in proportion to their claims."

"Then M. Petit-Claud is bringing us to bankruptcy," she cried.

"Petit-Claud is carrying out your husband's instructions," said the magistrate; "he is anxious to gain time, so his attorney says. In my opinion, you would perhaps do better to waive the appeal and buy in at the sale the indispensable implements for carrying on the business; you and your father-in-law together might do this, you to the extent of your claim through your marriage contract, and he for his arrears of rent. But that would be bringing the matter to an end too soon perhaps. The lawyers are making a good thing out of your case."

"But then I should be entirely in M. Séchard's father's hands. I should owe him the hire of the machinery as well as the house-rent; and my husband would still be open to further proceedings from M. Métivier, for M. Métivier would have had almost nothing."

"That is true, madame."

"Very well, then we should be even worse off than we are."

"The arm of the law, madame, is at the creditor's disposal. You have received three thousand francs, and you must of necessity repay the money."

"Oh, sir, can you think that we are capable——" Eve suddenly came to a stop. She saw that her justification might injure her brother.

"Oh! I know quite well that this is an obscure affair, that the debtors on the one side are honest, scrupulous, and even behaving handsomely; and the creditor, on the other, is only a cat's-paw——"

Eve, aghast, looked at him with bewildered eyes.

"You can understand," he continued, with a look full of homely shrewdness, "that we on the bench have plenty of time to think over all that goes on under our eyes, while the gentlemen in court are arguing with each other."

Eve went home in despair over her useless effort. That evening at seven o'clock, Doublon came with the notification of imprisonment for debt. The proceedings had reached the acute stage.

"After this, I can only go out after nightfall," said David.

Eve and Mme. Chardon burst into tears. To be in hiding was for them a shameful thing. As for Kolb and Marion, they were the more alarmed for David because they had long since made up their minds that there was no guile in their master's nature; so frightened were they on his account, that they came upstairs under pretence of asking whether they could do anything, and found Eve and Mme. Chardon in tears; the three whose life had been so straightforward hitherto were overcome by the thought that David must go into hiding. And how, moreover, could they hope to escape the invisible spies who henceforth would dog every least movement of a man, unluckily so absent-minded?

"Gif montame vill vait ein liddle kvarter hour, she can regonnoitre der enemy's camp," put in Kolb. "You shall see dot I oonderstand mein pizness; for gif I look like ein German, I am ein drue Vrenchman, and, vat is more, I am ver' conning."

"Oh! madame, do let him go," begged Marion. "He is only thinking of saving his master; he hasn't another thought in his head. Kolb is not an Alsacien, he is—eh! well—a regular Newfoundland dog for rescuing folk."

"Go, my good Kolb," said David; "we have still time to do something."

Kolb hurried off to pay a visit to the bailiff; and it so fell out that David's enemies were in Doublon's office, holding a council as to the best way of securing him.

The arrest of a debtor is an unheard-of thing in the country, an abnormal proceeding if ever there was one. Everybody, in the first place, knows everybody else, and creditor and debtor being bound to meet eachother daily all their lives long, nobody likes to take this odious course. When a defaulter—to use the provincial term for a debtor, for they do not mince their words in the provinces when speaking of this legalized method of helping yourself to another man's goods—when a defaulter plans a failure on a large scale, he takes sanctuary in Paris. Paris is a kind of City of Refuge for provincial bankrupts, an almost impenetrable retreat; the writ of the pursuing bailiff has no force beyond the limits of his jurisdiction, and there are other obstacles rendering it almost invalidating. Wherefore the Paris bailiff is empowered to enter the house of a third party to seize the person of the debtor, while for the bailiff of the provinces the domicile is absolutely inviolable. The law probably makes this exception as to Paris, because there it is the rule for two or more families to live under the same roof; but in the provinces the bailiff who wishes to make forcible entry must have an order from the Justice of the Peace; and so wide a discretion is allowed the Justice of the Peace, that he is practically able to give or withhold assistance to the bailiffs. To the honor of the Justices, it should be said, that they dislike the office, and are by no means anxious to assist blind passions or revenge.

There are, besides, other and no less serious difficulties in the way of arrest for debt—difficulties which tend to temper the severity of legislation, and public opinion not infre-

quently makes a dead letter of the law. In great cities there are poor or degraded wretches enough; poverty and vice know no scruples, and consent to play the spy, but in a little country town, people know each other too well to earn wages of the bailiff; the meanest creature who should lend himself to dirty work of this kind would be forced to leave the place. In the absence of recognized machinery, therefore, the arrest of a debtor is a problem presenting no small difficulty; it becomes a kind of strife of ingenuity between the bailiff and the debtor, and matter for many pleasant stories in the newspapers.

Cointet the elder did not choose to appear in the affair; but the fat Cointet openly said that he was acting for Métivier, and went to Doublon, taking Cérizet with him. Cérizet was his foreman now, and had promised his co-operation in return for a thousand-franc note. Doublon could reckon upon two of his understrappers, and thus the Cointets had four bloodhounds already on the victim's track. At the actual time of arrest, Doublon could furthermore count upon the police force, who are bound, if required, to assist a bailiff in the performance of his duty. The two men, Doublon himself, and the visitors were all closeted together in the private office, beyond the public office, on the ground floor.

A tolerably wide-paved lobby, a kind of passage-way, led to the public office. The gilded scutcheons of the court, with the word "Bailiff" printed thereon in large black letters, hung outside on the house wall on either side the door. Both office windows gave upon the street, and were protected by heavy iron bars; but the private office looked into the garden at the back, wherein Doublon, an adorer of Pomona, grew espaliers with marked success. Opposite the office door you beheld the door of the kitchen, and, beyond the kitchen, the staircase that ascended to the first story. The house was situated in a narrow street at the back of the new Law Courts, then in process of construction, and only finished after 1830.—These details are perhaps necessary if Kolb's adventures are to be intelligible to the reader.

It was Kolb's idea to go to the bailiff, to pretend to be willing to betray his master, and in this way to discover the traps which would be laid for David. Kolb told the servant who opened the door that he wanted to speak to M. Doublon on business. The servant was busy washing up her plates and dishes, and not very well pleased at Kolb's interruption; she pushed open the door of the outer office, and bade him wait there till her master was at liberty; then, as he was a stranger to her, she told the master in the private office that "a man" wanted to speak to him. Now, "a man" so invariably means "a peasant," that Doublon said, "Tell him to wait," and Kolb took a seat close to the door of the private office. There were voices talking within.

"Ah, by the by, how do you mean to set about it? For, if we can catch him to-morrow, it will be so much time saved." It was the fat Cointet who spoke.

"Nothing easier; the gaffer has come fairly by his nickname," said Cérizet.

At the sound of the fat Cointet's voice, Kolb guessed at once that they were talking about his master, espectially as the sense of the words began to dawn upon him; but, when he recognized Cérizet's tones, his astonishment grew more and more.

"Und dat fellow haf eaten his pread!" he thought, horror-stricken.

"We must do it in this way, boys," said Doublon. "We will post our men, at good long intervals, about the Rue de Beaulieu and the Place du Mûrier in every direction, so that we can follow the gaffer (I like that word) without his knowledge. We will not lose sight of him until he is safe inside the house where he means to lie in hiding (as he thinks); there we will leave him in peace for awhile; then some fine day we will come across him before sunrise or sunset."

"But what is he doing now, at this moment? He may be slipping through our fingers," said the fat Cointet.

"He is in his house," answered Doublon; "if he left it, I should know. I have one witness posted in the Place du

Mûrier, another at the corner of the Law Courts, and another thirty paces from the house. If our man came out, they would whistle; he could not make three paces from his door but I should know of it at once from the signal."

(Bailiffs speak of their understrappers by the polite title of "witnesses.")

Here was better hap than Kolb had expected! He went noiselessly out of the office, and spoke to the maid in the kitchen.

"Meestair Touplon ees encaged for som time to kom," he said; "I vill kom back early to-morrow morning."

A sudden idea had struck the Alsacien, and he proceeded to put it into execution. Kolb had served in a cavalry regiment; he hurried off to see a livery stable-keeper, an acquaintance of his, picked out a horse, had it saddled, and rushed back to the Place du Mûrier. He found Madame Eve in the lowest depths of despondency.

"What is it, Kolb?" asked David, when the Alsacien's face looked in upon them, scared but radiant.

"You have scountrels all arount you. De safest way ees to hide de master. Haf montame thought of hiding de master anywheres?"

When Kolb, honest fellow, had explained the whole history of Cérizet's treachery, of the circle traced about the house, and of the fat Cointet's interest in the affair, and given the family some inkling of the schemes set on foot by the Cointets against the master,—then David's real position gradually became fatally clear.

"It is the Cointets' doing!" cried poor Eve, aghast at the news; "*they* are proceeding against you! that accounts for Métivier's hardness. . . . They are paper-makers—David! they want your secret!"

"But what can we do to escape them?" exclaimed Mme. Chardon.

"If de misdress had som liddle blace vere the master could pe hidden," said Kolb; "I bromise to take him dere so dot nopody shall know."

"Wait till nightfall, and go to Basine Clerget," said Eve. "I will go now and arrange it all with her. In this case, Basine will be like another self to me."

"Spies will follow you," David said at last, recovering some presence of mind. "How can we find a way of communicating with Basine if none of us can go to her?"

"Montame kan go," said Kolb. "Here ees my scheme—I go out mit der master, ve draws der vischtlers on our drack. Montame kan go to Montemoiselle Clerchet; nopody vill vollow her. I haf a horse; I take de master oop behint; und der teufel is in it if they katches us."

"Very well; good-bye, dear," said poor Eve, springing to her husband's arms; "none of us can go to see you, the risk is too great. We must say good-bye for the whole time that your imprisonment lasts. We will write to each other; Basine will post your letters, and I will write under cover to her."

No sooner did David and Kolb come out of the house than they heard a sharp whistle, and were followed to the livery stable. Once there, Kolb took his master up behind him, with a caution to keep tight hold.

"Veestle avay, mine goot vriends! I care not von rap," cried Kolb. "You vil not katch an old trooper," and the old cavalry man clapped both spurs to his horse, and was out into the country and the darkness not merely before the spies could follow, but before they had time to discover the direction that he took.

Eve meanwhile went out on the tolerably ingenious pretext of asking advice of Postel, sat awhile enduring the insulting pity that spends itself in words, left the Postel family, and stole away unseen to Basine Clerget, told her troubles, and asked for help and shelter. Basine, for greater safety, had brought Eve into her bedroom, and now she opened the door of a little closet, lighted only by a skylight in such a way that prying eyes could not see into it. The two friends unstopped the flue which opened into the chimney of the stove in the workroom, where the girls heated their irons. Eve and Basine spread ragged coverlets over the brick floor to deaden

any sound that David might make, put in a truckle bed, a stove for his experiments, and a table and a chair. Basine promised to bring food in the night; and as no one had occasion to enter her room, David might defy his enemies one and all, or even detectives.

"At last!" Eve said, with her arms about her friend, "at last he is in safety."

Eve went back to Postel to submit a fresh doubt that had occurred to her, she said. She would like the opinion of such an experienced member of the Chamber of Commerce; she so managed that he escorted her home, and listened patiently to his commiseration.

"Would this have happened if you had married me?"—all the little druggist's remarks were pitched in this key.

Then he went home again to find Mme. Postel jealous of Mme. Séchard, and furious with her spouse for his polite attention to that beautiful woman. The apothecary advanced the opinion that little red-haired women were preferable to tall, dark women, who, like fine horses, were always in the stable, he said. He gave proofs of his sincerity, no doubt, for Mme. Postel was very sweet to him next day.

"We may be easy," Eve said to her mother and Marion, whom she found still "in a taking," in the latter's phrase.

"Oh! they are gone," said Marion, when Eve looked unthinkingly round the room.

One league out of Angoulême on the main road to Paris, Kolb stopped.

"Vere shall we go?"

"To Marsac," said David; "since we are on the way already, I will try once more to soften my father's heart."

"I would rader mount to der assault of a pattery," said Kolb, "your resbected fader haf no heart whatefer."

The ex-pressman had no belief in his son; he judged him from the outside point of view, and waited for results. He had no idea, to begin with, that he had plundered David, nor did he make allowance for the very different circumstances

under which they had begun life; he said to himself, "I set him up with a printing-house, just as I found it myself; and he, knowing a thousand times more than I did, cannot keep it going." He was mentally incapable of understanding his son; he laid the blame of failure upon him, and even prided himself, as it were, on his superiority to a far greater intellect than his own, with the thought, "I am securing his bread for him."

Moralists will never succeed in making us comprehend the full extent of the influence of sentiment upon self-interest, an influence every whit as strong as the action of interest upon our sentiments; for every law of our nature works in two ways, and acts and reacts upon us.

David, on his side, understood his father, and in his sublime charity forgave him. Kolb and David reached Marsac at eight o'clock, and suddenly came in upon the old man as he was finishing his dinner, which, by force of circumstances, came very near bedtime.

"I see you because there is no help for it," said old Séchard with a sour smile.

"Und how should you and mein master meet? He soars in der shkies, and you are always mit your vines! You bay for him, that's vot you are a fader for——"

"Come, Kolb, off with you. Put up the horse at Mme. Courtois' so as to save inconvenience here; fathers are always in the right, remember that."

Kolb went off, growling like a chidden dog, obedient but protesting; and David proposed to give his father indisputable proof of his discovery, while reserving his secret. He offered to give him an interest in the affair in return for money paid down; a sufficient sum to release him from his present difficulties, with or without a further amount of capital to be employed in developing the invention.

"And how are you going to prove to me that you can make good paper that costs nothing out of nothing, eh?" asked the ex-printer, giving his son a glance, vinous, it may be, but keen, inquisitive, and covetous; a look like a flash of light-

ning from a sodden cloud; for the old "bear," faithful to his traditions, never went to bed without a nightcap, consisting of a couple of bottles of excellent old wine, which he "tippled down" of an evening, to use his own expression.

"Nothing simpler," said David; "I have none of the paper about me, for I came here to be out of Doublon's way; and having come so far, I thought I might as well come to you at Marsac as borrow of a money-lender. I have nothing on me but my clothes. Shut me up somewhere on the premises, so that nobody can come in and see me at work, and——"

"What? you will not let me see you at your work then?" asked the old man, with an ugly look at his son.

"You have given me to understand plainly, father, that in matters of business there is no question of father and son——"

"Ah! you distrust the father that gave you life!"

"No; the other father who took away the means of earning a livelihood."

"Each for himself, you are right!" said the old man. "Very good, I will put you in the cellar."

"I will go down there with Kolb. You must let me have a large pot for my pulp," said David; then he continued, without noticing the quick look his father gave him,—"and you must find artichoke and asparagus stalks for me, and nettles, and the reeds that you cut by the stream side, and to-morrow morning I will come out of your cellar with some splendid paper."

"If you can do that," hiccoughed the "bear," "I will let you have, perhaps—I will see, that is, if I can let you have—pshaw! twenty-five thousand francs. On condition, mind, that you make as much for me every year."

"Put me to the proof, I am quite willing," cried David. "Kolb! take the horse and go to Mansle, quick, buy a large hair sieve for me of a cooper, and some glue of the grocer, and come back again as soon as you can."

"There! drink," said old Séchard, putting down a bottle of wine, a loaf, and the cold remains of the dinner. "You

will need your strength. I will go and look for your bits of green stuff; green rags you use for your pulp, and a trifle too green, I am afraid."

Two hours later, towards eleven o'clock that night, David and Kolb took up their quarters in a little out-house against the cellar wall; they found the floor paved with runnel tiles, and all the apparatus used in the Angoumois for the manufacture of Cognac brandy.

"Pans and firewood! Why, it is as good as a factory made on purpose!" cried David.

"Very well, good-night," said old Séchard; "I shall lock you in, and let both the dogs loose; nobody will bring you any paper, I am sure. You show me those sheets to-morrow, and I give you my word I will be your partner and the business will be straightforward and properly managed."

David and Kolb, locked into the distillery, spent nearly two hours in macerating the stems, using a couple of logs for mallets. The fire blazed up, the water boiled. About two o'clock in the morning, Kolb heard a sound which David was too busy to notice, a kind of deep breath like a suppressed hiccough. Snatching up one of the two lighted dips, he looked round the walls, and beheld old Séchard's empurpled countenance filling up a square opening above a door hitherto hidden by a pile of empty casks in the cellar itself. The cunning old man had brought David and Kolb into his underground distillery by the outer door, through which the casks were rolled when full. The inner door had been made so that he could roll his puncheons straight from the cellar into the distillery, instead of taking them round through the yard.

"Aha! thees eies not fair blay, you vant to shvindle your son!" cried the Alsacien. "Do you know vot you do ven you trink ein pottle of vine? You gif goot trink to ein bad scountrel."

"Oh, father!" cried David.

"I came to see if you wanted anything," said old Séchard, half sobered by this time.

"Und it was for de inderest vot you take in us dot you

brought der liddle ladder!" commented Kolb, as he pushed the casks aside and flung open the door; and there, in fact, on a short step-ladder, the old man stood in his shirt.

"Risking your health!" said David.

"I think I must be walking in my sleep," said old Séchard, coming down in confusion. "Your want of confidence in your father set me dreaming; I dreamed you were making a pact with the Devil to do impossible things."

"Der teufel," said Kolb; "dot is your own bassion for de liddle goldfinches."

"Go back to bed again, father," said David; "lock us in if you will, but you may save yourself the trouble of coming down again. Kolb will mount guard."

At four o'clock in the morning David came out of the distillery; he had been careful to leave no sign of his occupation behind him; but he brought out some thirty sheets of paper that left nothing to be desired in fineness, whiteness, toughness, and strength, all of them bearing by way of water-mark the impress of the uneven hairs of the sieve. The old man took up the samples and put his tongue to them, the lifelong habit of the pressman, who tests papers in this way. He felt it between his thumb and finger, crumpled and creased it, put it through all the trials by which a printer assays the quality of a sample submitted to him, and when it was found wanting in no respect, he still would not allow that he was beaten.

"We have yet to know how it takes an impression," he said, to avoid praising his son.

"Fonny man!" exclaimed Kolb.

The old man was cool enough now. He cloaked his feigned hesitation with paternal dignity.

"I wish to tell you in fairness, father, that even now it seems to me that the paper costs more than it ought to do; I want to solve the problem of sizing it in the pulping-trough. I have just that one improvement to make."

"Oho! so you are trying to trick me!"

"Well, shall I tell you? I can size the pulp as it is, but so far I cannot do it evenly, and the surface is as rough as a burr!"

"Very good, size your pulp in the trough, and you shall have my money."

"Mein master vill nefer see de golor of your money," declared Kolb.

Plainly, the old man meant to punish David for last night's humiliation, for he treated him more than coldly. David sent away Kolb.

"Father," he began, "I have never borne you any grudge for making over the business to me at such an exorbitant valuation; I have seen the father through it all. I have said to myself—'The old man has worked very hard, and he certainly gave me a better bringing up than I had a right to expect; let him enjoy the fruits of his toil in peace, and in his own way.—I even gave up my mother's money to you. I began encumbered with debt, and bore all the burdens that you put upon me without a murmur. Well, harassed for debts that were not of my making, with no bread in the house, and my feet held to the flames, I have found out the secret. I have struggled on patiently till my strength is exhausted. It is perhaps your duty to help me, but do not give *me* a thought; think of a woman and a little one" (David could not keep back the tears at this); "think of them, and give them help and protection.—Kolb and Marion have given me their savings; will you do less?" he cried at last, seeing that his father was as cold as the impression-stone.

"And that was not enough for you," said the old man, without the slightest sense of shame; "why, you would waste the wealth of the Indies! Good-night! I am too ignorant to lend a hand in schemes got up on purpose to exploit me. A monkey will never gobble down a bear" (alluding to the workshop nicknames); "I am a vinegrower, I am not a banker. And what is more, look you, business between father and son never turns out well. Stay and eat your dinner here; you shan't say that you came for nothing."

There are some deep-hearted natures that can force their own pain down into inner depths unsuspected by those dearest to them; and with them, when anguish forces its way to the

surface and is visible, it is only after a mighty upheaval. David's nature was one of these. Eve had thoroughly understood the noble character of the man. But now that the depths had been stirred, David's father took the wave of anguish that passed over his son's features for a child's trick, an attempt to "get round" his father, and his bitter grief for mortification over the failure of the attempt. Father and son parted in anger.

David and Kolb reached Angoulême on the stroke of midnight. They came back on foot, and stealthily, like burglars. Before one o'clock in the morning David was installed in the impenetrable hiding-place prepared by his wife in Basine Clerget's house. No one saw him enter it, and the pity that henceforth should shelter David was the most resourceful pity of all—the pity of a work-girl.

Kolb bragged that day that he had saved his master on horseback, and only left him in a carrier's van well on the way to Limoges. A sufficient provision of raw material had been laid up in Basine's cellar, and Kolb, Marion, Mme. Séchard, and her mother had no communication with the house.

Two days after the scene at Marsac, old Séchard came hurrying to Angoulême and his daughter-in-law. Covetousness had brought him. There were three clear weeks ahead before the vintage began, and he thought he would be on the look-out for squalls, to use his own expression. To this end he took up his quarters in one of the attics which he had reserved by the terms of the lease, wilfully shutting his eyes to the bareness and want that made his son's home desolate. If they owed him rent, they could well afford to keep him. He ate his food from a tinned iron plate, and made no marvel at it. "I began in the same way," he told his daughter-in-law, when she apologized for the absence of silver spoons.

Marion was obliged to run into debt for necessaries for them all. Kolb was earning a franc for daily wage as a bricklayer's laborer; and at last poor Eve, who, for the sake of her husband and child, had sacrificed her last resources to enter-

tain David's father, saw that she had only ten francs left. She had hoped to the last to soften the old miser's heart by her affectionate respect, and patience, and pretty attentions; but old Séchard was obdurate as ever. When she saw him turn the same cold eyes on her, the same look that the Cointets had given her, and Petit-Claud and Cérizet, she tried to watch and guess old Séchard's intentions. Trouble thrown away! Old Séchard, never sober, never drunk, was inscrutable; intoxication is a double veil. If the old man's tipsiness was sometimes real, it was quite as often feigned for the purpose of extracting David's secret from his wife. Sometimes he coaxed, sometimes he frightened his daughter-in-law.

"I will drink up my property; *I will buy an annuity,*" he would threaten when Eve told him that she knew nothing.

The humiliating struggle was wearing her out; she kept silence at last, lest she should show disrespect to her husband's father.

"But, father," she said one day when driven to extremity, "there is a very simple way of finding out everything. Pay David's debts; he will come home, and you can settle it between you."

"Ha! that is what you want to get out of me, is it?" he cried. "It is as well to know!"

But if Séchard had no belief in his son, he had plenty of faith in the Cointets. He went to consult them, and the Cointets dazzled him of set purpose, telling him that his son's experiments might mean millions of francs.

"If David can prove that he has succeeded, I shall not hesitate to go into partnership with him, and reckon his discovery as half the capital," the tall Cointet told him.

The suspicious old man learned a good deal over nips of brandy with the work-people, and something more by questioning Petit-Claud and feigning stupidity; and at length he felt convinced that the Cointets were the real movers behind Métivier; they were plotting to ruin Séchard's printing establishment, and to lure him (Séchard) on to pay his son's debts by holding out the discovery as a bait. The old man of the

people did not suspect that Petit-Claud was in the plot, nor had he any idea of the toils woven to ensnare the great secret. A day came at last when he grew angry and out of patience with the daughter-in-law who would not so much as tell him where David was hiding; he determined to force the laboratory door, for he had discovered that David was wont to make his experiments in the workshop where the rollers were melted down.

He came downstairs very early one morning and set to work upon the lock.

"Hey! Papa Séchard, what are you doing there?" Marion called out. (She had risen at daybreak to go to her paper-mill, and now she sprang across to the workshop.)

"I am in my own house, am I not?" said the old man, in some confusion.

"Oh, indeed, are you turning thief in your old age? You are not drunk this time either—— I shall go straight to the mistress and tell her."

"Hold your tongue, Marion," said Séchard, drawing two crowns of six francs each from his pocket. "There——"

"I will hold my tongue, but don't you do it again," said Marion, shaking her finger at him, "or all Angoulême shall hear of it."

The old man had scarcely gone out, however, when Marion went up to her mistress.

"Look, madame," she said, "I have had twelve francs out of your father-in-law, and here they are——"

"How did you do it?"

"What was he wanting to do but to take a look at the master's pots and pans and stuff, to find out the secret, forsooth. I knew quite well that there was nothing in the little place, but I frightened him and talked as if he were setting about robbing his son, and he gave me twelve francs to say nothing about it."

Just at that moment Basine came in radiant, and with a letter for her friend, a letter from David written on magnificent paper, which she handed over when they were alone.

"My adored Eve,—I am writing to you the first letter on my first sheet of paper made by the new process. I have solved the problem of sizing the pulp in the trough at last. A pound of pulp costs five sous, even supposing that the raw material is grown on good soil with special culture; three francs' worth of sized pulp will make a ream of paper, at twelve pounds to the ream. I am quite sure that I can lessen the weight of books by one-half. The envelope, the letter, and samples enclosed are all manufactured in different ways. I kiss you; you shall have wealth now to add to our happiness, everything else we had before."

"There!" said Eve, handing the samples to her father-in-law, "when the vintage is over let your son have the money, give him a chance to make his fortune, and you shall be repaid ten times over; he has succeeded at last!"

Old Séchard hurried at once to the Cointets. Every sample was tested and minutely examined; the prices, from three to ten francs per ream, were noted on each separate slip; some were sized, others unsized; some were of almost metallic purity, others soft as Japanese paper; in color there was every possible shade of white. If old Séchard and the two Cointets had been Jews examining diamonds, their eyes could not have glistened more eagerly.

"Your son is on the right track," the fat Cointet said at length.

"Very well, pay his debts," returned old Séchard.

"By all means, if he will take us into partnership," said the tall Cointet.

"You are extortioners!" cried old Séchard. "You have been suing him under Métivier's name, and you mean me to buy you off; that is the long and the short of it. Not such a fool, gentlemen——"

The brothers looked at one another, but they contrived to hide their surprise at the old miser's shrewdness.

"We are not millionaires," said fat Cointet; "we do not discount bills for amusement. We should think ourselves well

off if we could pay ready money for our bits of accounts for rags, and we still give bills to our dealer."

"The experiment ought to be tried first on a much larger scale," the tall Cointet said coldly; "sometimes you try a thing with a saucepan and succeed, and fail utterly when you experiment with bulk. You should help your son out of difficulties."

"Yes; but when my son was at liberty, would he take me as his partner?"

"That is no business of ours," said the fat Cointet. "My good man, do you suppose that when you have paid some ten thousand francs for your son, that there is an end of it? It will cost two thousand francs to take out a patent; there will be journeys to Paris; and before going to any expense, it would be prudent to do as my brother here suggests, and make a thousand reams or so; to try several whole batches to make sure. You see, there is nothing you must be so much on your guard against as an inventor."

"I have a liking for bread ready buttered myself," added the tall Cointet.

All through that night the old man ruminated over this dilemma—"If I pay David's debts, he will be set at liberty, and once set at liberty, he need not share his fortune with me unless he chooses. He knows very well that I cheated him over the first partnership, and he will not care to try a second; so it is to my interest to keep him shut up, the wretched boy."

The Cointets knew enough of Séchard senior to see that they should hunt in couples. All three said to themselves—"Experiments must be tried before the discovery can take any practical shape. David Séchard must be set at liberty before those experiments can be made; and David Séchard, set at liberty, will slip through our fingers."

Everybody involved, moreover, had his own little afterthought.

Petit-Claud, for instance, said, "As soon as I am married, I will slip my neck out of the Cointets' yoke; but till then I shall hold on."

The tall Cointet thought, "I would rather have David under lock and key, and then I should be master of the situation."

Old Séchard, too, thought, "If I pay my son's debts, he will repay me with a 'Thank you!' "

Eve, hard pressed (for the old man threatened now to turn her out of the house), would neither reveal her husband's hiding-place, nor even send proposals of a safe-conduct. She could not feel sure of finding so safe a refuge a second time.

"Set your son at liberty," she told her father-in-law, "and then you shall know everything."

The four interested persons sat, as it were, with a banquet spread before them, none of them daring to begin, each one suspicious and watchful of his neighbor. A few days after David went into hiding, Petit-Claud went to the mill to see the tall Cointet.

"I have done my best," he said; "David has gone into prison of his own accord somewhere or other; he is working out some improvement there in peace. It is no fault of mine if you have not gained your end; are you going to keep your promise?"

"Yes, if we succeed," said the tall Cointet. "Old Séchard was here only a day or two ago; he came to ask us some questions as to paper-making. The old miser has got wind of his son's invention; he wants to turn it to his own account, so there is some hope of a partnership. You are with the father and the son——"

"Be the third person in the trinity and give them up," smiled Petit-Claud.

"Yes," said Cointet. "When you have David in prison, or bound to us by a deed of partnership, you shall marry Mlle. de la Haye."

"Is that your *ultimatum?*"

"My *sine quâ non,*" said Cointet, "since we are speaking in foreign languages."

"Then here is mine in plain language," Petit-Claud said drily.

"Ah! let us have it," answered Cointet, with some curiosity.

"You will present me to-morrow to Mme. de Senonches, and do something definite for me; you will keep your word, in short; or I will clear off Séchard's debts myself, sell my practice, and go into partnership with him. I will not be duped. You have spoken out, and I am doing the same. I have given proof, give me proof of your sincerity. You have all, and I have nothing. If you won't do fairly by me, I know your cards, and I shall play for my own hand."

The tall Cointet took his hat and umbrella, his face at the same time taking its Jesuitical expression, and out he went, bidding Petit-Claud come with him.

"You shall see, my friend, whether I have prepared your way for you," said he.

The shrewd paper-manufacturer saw his danger at a glance; and saw, too, that with a man like Petit-Claud it was better to play above board. Partly to be prepared for contingencies, partly to satisfy his conscience, he had dropped a word or two to the point in the ear of the ex-consul-general, under the pretext of putting Mlle. de la Haye's financial position before that gentleman.

"I have the man for Françoise," he had said; "for with thirty thousand francs of *dot,* a girl must not expect too much nowadays."

"We will talk it over later on," answered Francis du Hautoy, ex-consul-general. "Mme. de Senonches' position has altered very much since Mme. de Bargeton went away; we very likely might marry Françoise to some elderly country gentleman."

"She would disgrace herself if you did," Cointet returned in his dry way. "Better marry her to some capable, ambitious young man; you could help him with your influence, and he would make a good position for his wife."

"We shall see," said Francis du Hautoy; "her godmother ought to be consulted first, in any case."

When M. de Bargeton died, his wife sold the great house in the Rue du Minage. Mme. de Senonches, finding her own house scarcely large enough, persuaded M. de Senonches to

buy the Hôtel de Bargeton, the cradle of Lucien Chardon's ambitions, the scene of the earliest events in his career. Zéphirine de Senonches had it in mind to succeed to Mme. de Bargeton; she, too, would be a kind of queen in Angoulême; she would have "a salon," and be a great lady, in short. There was a schism in Angoulême, a strife dating from the late M. de Bargeton's duel with M. de Chandour. Some maintained that Louise de Nègrepelisse was blameless, others believed in Stanislas de Chandour's scandals. Mme. de Senonches declared for the Bargetons, and began by winning over that faction. Many frequenters of the Hôtel de Bargeton had been so accustomed for years to their nightly game of cards in the house that they could not leave it, and Mme. de Senonches turned this fact to account. She received every evening, and certainly gained all the ground lost by Amélie de Chandour, who set up for a rival.

Francis du Hautoy, living in the inmost circle of nobility in Angoulême, went so far as to think of marrying Françoise to old M. de Séverac, Mme. du Brossard having totally failed to capture that gentleman for her daughter; and when Mme. de Bargeton reappeared as the prefect's wife, Zéphirine's hopes for her dear goddaughter waxed high, indeed. The Comtesse du Châtelet, so she argued, would be sure to use her influence for her champion.

Boniface Cointet had Angoulême at his fingers' ends; he saw all the difficulties at a glance, and resolved to sweep them out of the way by a bold stroke that only a Tartuffe's brain could invent. The puny lawyer was not a little amazed to find his fellow-conspirator keeping his word with him; not a word did Petit-Claud utter; he respected the musings of his companion, and they walked the whole way from the paper-mill to the Rue du Minage in silence.

"Monsieur and madame are at breakfast"—this announcement met the ill-timed visitors on the steps.

"Take in our names, all the same," said the tall Cointet; and feeling sure of his position, he followed immediately behind the servant and introduced his companion to the elab-

orately-affected Zéphirine, who was breakfasting in company with M. Francis du Hautoy and Mlle. de la Haye. M. de Senonches had gone, as usual, for a day's shooting over M. de Pimentel's land.

"M. Petit-Claud is the young lawyer of whom I spoke to you, madame; he will go through the trust accounts when your fair ward comes of age."

The ex-diplomatist made a quick scrutiny of Petit-Claud, who, for his part, was looking furtively at the "fair ward." As for Zéphirine, who heard of the matter for the first time, her surprise was so great that she dropped her fork.

Mlle. de la Haye, a shrewish young woman with an ill-tempered face, a waist that could scarcely be called slender, a thin figure, and colorless, fair hair, in spite of a certain little air that she had, was by no means easy to marry. The "parentage unknown" on her birth certificate was the real bar to her entrance into the sphere where her godmother's affection strove to establish her. Mlle. de la Haye, ignorant of her real position, was very hard to please; the richest merchant in L'Houmeau had found no favor in her sight. Cointet saw the sufficiently significant expression of the young lady's face at the sight of the little lawyer, and turning, beheld a precisely similar grimace on Petit-Claud's countenance. Mme. de Senonches and Francis looked at each other, as if in search of an excuse for getting rid of the visitors. All this Cointet saw. He asked M. du Hautoy for the favor of a few minutes' speech with him, and the pair went together into the drawing-room.

"Fatherly affection is blinding you, sir," he said bluntly. "You will not find it an easy thing to marry your daughter; and, acting in your interest throughout, I have put you in a position from which you cannot draw back; for I am fond of Françoise, she is my ward. Now—Petit-Claud knows *everything!* His overweening ambition is a guarantee for our dear child's happiness; for, in the first place, Françoise will do as she likes with her husband; and, in the second, he wants your influence. You can ask the new prefect for the post of

crown attorney for him in the court here. M. Milaud is definitely appointed to Nevers, Petit-Claud will sell his practice, you will have no difficulty in obtaining a deputy public prosecutor's place for him; and it will not be long before he becomes attorney for the crown, president of the court, deputy, what you will."

Francis went back to the dining-room and behaved charmingly to his daughter's suitor. He gave Mme. de Senonches a look, and brought the scene to a close with an invitation to dine with them on the morrow; Petit-Claud must come and discuss the business in hand. He even went downstairs and as far as the court with the visitors, telling Petit-Claud that, after Cointet's recommendation, both he and Mme. de Senonches were disposed to approve all that Mlle. de la Haye's trustee had arranged for the welfare of that little angel.

"Oh!" cried Petit-Claud, as they came away, "what a plain girl! I have been taken in——"

"She looks a lady-like girl," returned Cointet, "and besides, if she were a beauty, would they give her to you? Eh! my dear fellow, thirty thousand francs and the influence of Mme. de Senonches and the Comtesse du Châtelet! Many a small landowner would be wonderfully glad of the chance, and all the more so since M. Francis du Hautoy is never likely to marry, and all that he has will go to the girl. Your marriage is as good as settled."

"How?"

"That is what I am just going to tell you," returned Cointet, and he gave his companion an account of his recent bold stroke. "M. Milaud is just about to be appointed attorney for the crown at Nevers, my dear fellow," he continued; "sell your practice, and in ten years' time you will be Keeper of the Seals. You are not the kind of a man to draw back from any service required of you by the Court."

"Very well," said Petit-Claud, his zeal stirred by the prospect of such a career, "very well, be in the Place du Mûrier to-morrow at half-past four; I will see old Séchard in the meantime; we will have a deed of partnership drawn up, and

the father and the son shall be bound thereby, and delivered to the third person of the trinity—Cointet, to wit."

To return to Lucien in Paris. On the morrow of the loss announced in his letter, he obtained a *visa* for his passport, bought a stout holly stick, and went to the Rue d'Enfer to take a place in the little market van, which took him as far as Longjumeau for half a franc. He was going home to Angoulême. At the end of the first day's tramp he slept in a cowshed, two leagues from Arpajon. He had come no farther than Orleans before he was very weary, and almost ready to break down, but there he found a boatman willing to bring him as far as Tours for three francs, and food during the journey cost him but forty sous. Five days of walking brought him from Tours to Poitiers, and left him with but five francs in his pockets, but he summoned up all his remaining strength for the journey before him.

He was overtaken by night in the open country, and had made up his mind to sleep out of doors, when a traveling carriage passed by, slowly climbing the hillside, and, all unknown to the postilion, the occupants, and the servant, he managed to slip in among the luggage, crouching in between two trunks lest he should be shaken off by the jolting of the carriage—and so he slept.

He awoke with the sun shining into his eyes, and the sound of voices in his ears. The carriage had come to a standstill. Looking about him, he knew that he was at Mansle, the little town where he had waited for Mme. de Bargeton eighteen months before, when his heart was full of hope and love and joy. A group of post-boys eyed him curiously and suspiciously, covered with dust as he was, wedged in among the luggage. Lucien jumped down, but before he could speak two travelers stepped out of the calèche, and the words died away on his lips; for there stood the new Prefect of the Charente, Sixte du Châtelet, and his wife, Louise de Nègrepelisse.

"Chance gave us a traveling-companion, if we had but known!" said the Countess. "Come in with us, monsieur."

Lucien gave the couple a distant bow and a half-humbled, half-defiant glance; then he turned away into a cross-country road in search of some farmhouse, where he might make a breakfast on milk and bread, and rest awhile, and think quietly over the future. He still had three francs left. On and on he walked with the hurrying pace of fever, noticing as he went, down by the riverside, that the country grew more and more picturesque. It was near mid-day when he came upon a sheet of water with willows growing about the margin, and stopped for awhile to rest his eyes on the cool, thick-growing leaves; and something of the grace of the fields entered into his soul.

In among the crests of the willows, he caught a glimpse of a mill near-by on a branch stream, and of the thatched roof of the mill-house where the house-leeks were growing. For all ornament, the quaint cottage was covered with jessamine and honeysuckle and climbing hops, and the garden about it was gay with phloxes and tall, juicy-leaved plants. Nets lay drying in the sun along a paved causeway raised above the highest flood level, and secured by massive piles. Ducks were swimming in the clear mill-pond below the currents of water roaring over the wheel. As the poet came nearer he heard the clack of the mill, and saw the good-natured, homely woman of the house knitting on a garden bench, and keeping an eye upon a little one who was chasing the hens about.

Lucien came forward. "My good woman," he said, "I am tired out; I have a fever on me, and I have only three francs; will you undertake to give me brown bread and milk, and let me sleep in the barn for a week? I shall have time to write to my people, and they will either come to fetch me or send me money."

"I am quite willing, always supposing that my husband has no objection.—Hey! little man!"

The miller came up, gave Lucien a look over, and took his pipe out of his mouth to remark, "Three francs for a week's board? You might as well pay nothing at all."

"Perhaps I shall end as a miller's man," thought the poet.

as his eyes wandered over the lovely country. Then the miller's wife made a bed ready for him, and Lucien lay down and slept so long that his hostess was frightened.

"Courtois," she said, next day at noon, "just go in and see whether that young man is dead or alive; he has been lying there these fourteen hours."

The miller was busy spreading out his fishing-nets and lines. "It is my belief," he said, "that the pretty fellow yonder is some starveling play-actor without a brass farthing to bless himself with."

"What makes you think that, little man?" asked the mistress of the mill.

"Lord, he is not a prince, nor a lord, nor a member of parliament, nor a bishop; why are his hands as white as if he did nothing?"

"Then it is very strange that he does not feel hungry and wake up," retorted the miller's wife; she had just prepared breakfast for yesterday's chance guest. "A play-actor, is he?" she continued. "Where will he be going? It is too early yet for the fair at Angoulême."

But neither the miller nor his wife suspected that (actors, princes, and bishops apart) there is a kind of being who is both prince and actor, and invested besides with a magnificent order of priesthood—that the Poet seems to do nothing, yet reigns over all humanity when he can paint humanity.

"What can he be?" Courtois asked of his wife.

"Suppose it should be dangerous to take him in?" queried she.

"Pooh! thieves look more alive than that; we should have been robbed by this time," returned her spouse.

"I am neither a prince nor a thief, nor a bishop nor an actor," Lucien said wearily; he must have overheard the colloquy through the window, and now he suddenly appeared. "I am poor, I am tired out, I have come on foot from Paris. My name is Lucien de Rubempré, and my father was M. Chardon, who used to have Postel's business in L'Houmeau. My sister married David Séchard, the printer in the Place du Mûrier at Angoulême."

"Stop a bit," said the miller, "that printer is the son of the old skinflint who farms his own land at Marsac, isn't he?"

"The very same," said Lucien.

"He is a queer kind of a father, he is!" Courtois continued. "He is worth two hundred thousand francs and more, without counting his money-box, and he has sold his son up, they say."

When body and soul have been broken by a prolonged painful struggle, there comes a crisis when a strong nature braces itself for greater effort; but those who give way under the strain either die or sink into unconsciousness like death. That hour of crisis had struck for Lucien; at the vague rumor of the catastrophe that had befallen David he seemed almost ready to succumb. "Oh! my sister!" he cried. "Oh, God! what have I done? Base wretch that I am!"

He dropped down on the wooden bench, looking white and powerless as a dying man; the miller's wife brought out a bowl of milk and made him drink, but he begged the miller to help him back to his bed, and asked to be forgiven for bringing a dying man into their house. He thought his last hour had come. With the shadow of death, thoughts of religion crossed a brain so quick to conceive picturesque fancies; he would see the curé, he would confess and receive the last sacraments. The moan, uttered in the faint voice by a young man with such a comely face and figure, went to Mme. Courtois' heart.

"I say, little man, just take the horse and go to Marsac and ask Dr. Marron to come and see this young man; he is in a very bad way, it seems to me, and you might bring the curé as well. Perhaps they may know more about that printer in the Place du Mûrier than you do, for Postel married M. Marron's daughter."

Courtois departed. The miller's wife tried to make Lucien take food; like all country-bred folk, she was full of the idea that sick folk must be made to eat. He took no notice of her, but gave way to a violent storm of remorseful grief, a kind of mental process of counter-irritation, which relieved him.

The Courtois' mill lies a league away from Marsac, the town of the district, and the half-way halt between Mansle and Angoulême; so it was not long before the good miller came back with the doctor and the curé. Both functionaries had heard rumors coupling Lucien's name with the name of Mme. de Bargeton; and now when the whole department was talking of the lady's marriage to the new Prefect and her return to Angoulême as the Comtesse du Châtelet, both curé and doctor were consumed with a violent curiosity to know why M. de Bargeton's widow had not married the young poet with whom she had left Angoulême. And when they heard, furthermore, that Lucien was at the mill, they were eager to know whether the poet had come to the rescue of his brother-in-law. Curiosity and humanity alike prompted them to go at once to the dying man. Two hours after Courtois set out, Lucien heard the rattle of old iron over the stony causeway, the country doctor's ramshackle chaise came up to the door, and out stepped the MM. Marron, for the curé was the doctor's uncle. Lucien's bedside visitors were as intimate with David's father as country neighbors usually are in a small vine-growing township. The doctor looked at the dying man, felt his pulse, and examined his tongue; then he looked at the miller's wife, and smiled reassuringly.

"Mme. Courtois," said he, "if, as I do not doubt, you have a bottle of good wine somewhere in the cellar, and a fat eel in your fish-pond, put them before your patient, it is only exhaustion; there is nothing the matter with him. Our great man will be on his feet again directly."

"Ah! monsieur," said Lucien, "it is not the body, it is the mind that ails. These good people have told me tidings that nearly killed me; I have just heard bad news of my sister, Mme. Séchard. Mme. Courtois says that your daughter is married to Postel, monsieur, so you must know something of David Séchard's affairs; oh, for heaven's sake, monsieur, tell me what you know!"

"Why, he must be in prison," began the doctor; "his father would not help him——"

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"In prison!" repeated Lucien, "and why?"

"Because some bills came from Paris; he had overlooked them, no doubt, for he does not pay much attention to his business, they say," said Dr. Marron.

"Pray leave me with M. le Curé," said the poet, with a visible change of countenance. The doctor and the miller and his wife went out of the room, and Lucien was left alone with the old priest.

"Sir," he said, "I feel that death is near, and I deserve to die. I am a very miserable wretch; I can only cast myself into the arms of religion. I, sir, *I* have brought all these troubles on my sister and brother, for David Séchard has been a brother to me. I drew those bills that David could not meet! . . . I have ruined him. In my terrible misery, I forgot the crime. A millionaire put an end to the proceedings, and I quite believed that he had met the bills; but nothing of the kind has been done, it seems." And Lucien told the tale of his sorrows. The story, as he told it in his feverish excitement, was worthy of the poet. He besought the curé to go to Angoulême and to ask for news of Eve and his mother, Mme. Chardon, and to let him know the truth, and whether it was still possible to repair the evil.

"I shall live till you come back, sir," he added, as the hot tears fell. "If my mother, and sister, and David do not cast me off, I shall not die."

Lucien's remorse was terrible to see, the tears, the eloquence, the young white face with the heartbroken, despairing look, the tales of sorrow upon sorrow till human strength could no more endure, all these things aroused the curé's pity and interest.

"In the provinces, as in Paris," he said, "you must believe only half of all that you hear. Do not alarm yourself; a piece of hearsay, three leagues away from Angoulême, is sure to be far from the truth. Old Séchard, our neighbor, left Marsac some days ago; very likely he is busy settling his son's difficulties. I am going to Angoulême; I will come back and tell you whether you can return home; your confessions and repentance will help to plead your cause."

The curé did not know that Lucien had repented so many times during the last eighteen months, that penitence, however impassioned, had come to be a kind of drama with him, played to perfection, played so far in all good faith, but none the less a drama. To the curé succeeded the doctor. He saw that the patient was passing through a nervous crisis, and the danger was beginning to subside. The doctor-nephew spoke as comfortably as the curé-uncle, and at length the patient was persuaded to take nourishment.

Meanwhile the curé, knowing the manners and customs of the countryside, had gone to Mansle; the coach from Ruffec to Angoulême was due to pass about that time, and he found a vacant place in it. He would go to his grand-nephew Postel in L'Houmeau (David's former rival) and make inquiries of him. From the assiduity with which the little druggist assisted his venerable relative to alight from the abominable cage which did duty as a coach between Ruffec and Angoulême, it was apparent to the meanest understanding that M. and Mme. Postel founded their hopes of future ease upon the old curé's will.

"Have you breakfasted? Will you take something? We did not in the least expect you! This is a pleasant surprise!" Out came questions innumerable in a breath.

Mme. Postel might have been born to be the wife of an apothecary in L'Houmeau. She was a common-looking woman, about the same height as little Postel himself, such good looks as she possessed being entirely due to youth and health. Her florid auburn hair grew very low upon her forehead. Her demeanor and language were in keeping with homely features, a round countenance, the red cheeks of a country damsel, and eyes that might almost be described as yellow. Everything about her said plainly enough that she had been married for expectations of money. After a year of married life, therefore, she ruled the house; and Postel, only too happy to have discovered the heiress, meekly submitted to his wife. Mme. Léonie Postel, *née* Marron, was nursing her first child, the darling of the old curé, the doctor, and

Postel, a repulsive infant, with a strong likeness to both parents.

"Well, uncle," said Léonie, "what has brought you to Angoulême, since you will not take anything, and no sooner come in than you talk of going?"

But when the venerable ecclesiastic brought out the names of David Séchard and Eve, little Postel grew very red, and Léonie, his wife, felt it incumbent upon her to give him a jealous glance—the glance that a wife never fails to give when she is perfectly sure of her husband, and gives a look into the past by way of a caution for the future.

"What have yonder folk done to you, uncle, that you should mix yourself up with their affairs?" inquired Léonie, with very perceptible tartness.

"They are in trouble, my girl," said the curé, and he told the Postels about Lucien at the Courtois' mill.

"Oh! so that is the way he came back from Paris, is it?" exclaimed Postel. "Yet he had some brains, poor fellow, and he was ambitious, too. He went out to look for wool, and comes home shorn. But what does he want here? His sister is frightfully poor; for all these geniuses, David and Lucien alike, know very little about business. There was some talk of him at the Tribunal, and, as a judge, I was obliged to sign the warrant of execution. It was a painful duty. I do not know whether the sister's circumstances are such that Lucien can go to her; but in any case the little room that he used to occupy here is at liberty, and I shall be pleased to offer it to him."

"That is right, Postel," said the priest; he bestowed a kiss on the infant slumbering in Léonie's arms, and, adjusting his cocked hat, prepared to walk out of the shop.

"You will dine with us, uncle, of course," said Mme. Postel; "if once you meddle in those people's affairs, it will be some time before you have done. My husband will drive you back again in his little pony-cart."

Husband and wife stood watching their valued, aged relative on his way into Angoulême. "He carries himself well for his age, all the same," remarked the druggist.

By this time David had been in hiding for elevevn days in a house only two doors away from the druggist's shop, which the worthy ecclesiastic had just quitted to climb the steep path into Angoulême with the news of Lucien's present condition.

When the Abbé Marron debouched upon the Place du Mûrier he found three men, each one remarkable in his own way, and all of them bearing with their whole weight upon the present and future of the hapless voluntary prisoner. There stood old Séchard, the tall Cointet, and his confederate, the puny limb of the law, three men representing three phases of greed as widely different as the outward forms of the speakers. The first had it in his mind to sell his own son; the second, to betray his client; and the third, while bargaining for both iniquities, was inwardly resolved to pay for neither. It was nearly five o'clock. Passers-by on their way home to dinner stopped a moment to look at the group.

"What the devil can old Séchard and the tall Cointet have to say to each other?" asked the more curious.

"There is something on foot concerning that miserable wretch that leaves his wife and child and mother-in-law to starve," suggested some.

"Talk of sending a boy to Paris to learn his trade!" said a provincial oracle.

"M. le Curé, what brings you here, eh?" exclaimed old Séchard, catching sight of the Abbé as soon as he appeared.

"I have come on account of your family," answered the old man.

"Here is another of my son's notions!" exclaimed old Séchard.

"It would not cost you much to make everybody happy all round," said the priest, looking at the windows of the printing-house. Mme. Séchard's beautiful face appeared at that moment between the curtains; she was hushing her child's cries by tossing him in her arms and singing to him.

"Are you bringing news of my son?" asked old Séchard, "or what is more to the purpose—money?"

"No," answered M. Marron, "I am bringing the sister news of her brother."

"Of Lucien?" cried Petit-Claud.

"Yes. He walked all the way from Paris, poor young man. I found him at the Courtois' house; he was worn out with misery and fatigue. Oh! he is very much to be pitied."

Petit-Claud took the tall Cointet by the arm, saying aloud, "If we are going to dine with Mme. de Senonches, it is time to dress." When they had come away a few paces, he added, for his companion's benefit, "Catch the cub, and you will soon have the dam; we have David now——"

"I have found you a wife, find me a partner," said the tall Cointet with a treacherous smile.

"Lucien is an old school-fellow of mine; we used to be chums. I shall be sure to hear something from him in a week's time. Have the banns put up, and I will engage to put David in prison. When he is on the jailer's register I shall have done my part."

"Ah!" exclaimed the tall Cointet under his breath, "we might have the patent taken out in our name; that would be the thing!"

A shiver ran through the meagre little attorney when he heard those words.

Meanwhile Eve beheld her father-in-law enter with the Abbé Marron, who had let fall a word which unfolded the whole tragedy.

"Here is our curé, Mme. Séchard," the old man said, addressing his daughter-in-law, "and pretty tales about your brother he has to tell us, no doubt!"

"Oh!" cried poor Eve, cut to the heart; "what can have happened now?"

The cry told so unmistakably of many sorrows, of great dread on so many grounds, that the Abbé Marron made haste to say, "Reassure yourself, madame; he is living."

Eve turned to the vinegrower.

"Father," she said, "perhaps you will be good enough to go to my mother; she must hear all that this gentleman has to tell us of Lucien."

The old man went in search of Mme. Chardon, and addressed her in this wise:

"Go and have it out with the Abbé Marron; he is a good sort, priest though he is. Dinner will be late, no doubt. I shall come back again in an hour," and the old man went out. Insensible as he was to everything but the clink of money and the glitter of gold, he left Mme. Chardon without caring to notice the effect of the shock that he had given her.

Mme. Chardon had changed so greatly during the last eighteen months, that in that short time she no longer looked like the same woman. The troubles hanging over both of her children, her abortive hopes for Lucien, the unexpected deterioration in one in whose powers and honesty she had for so long believed,—all these things had told heavily upon her. Mme. Chardon was not only noble by birth, she was noble by nature; she idolized her children; consequently, during the last six months she had suffered as never before since her widowhood. Lucien might have borne the name of Lucien de Rubempré by royal letters patent; he might have founded the family anew, revived the title, and borne the arms; he might have made a great name—he had thrown the chance away; nay, he had fallen into the mire!

For Mme. Chardon the mother was a harder judge than Eve the sister. When she heard of the bills, she looked upon Lucien as lost. A mother is often fain to shut her eyes, but she always knows the child that she held at her breast, the child that has been always with her in the house; and so when Eve and David discussed Lucien's chances of success in Paris, and Lucien's mother to all appearance shared Eve's illusions, in her inmost heart there was a tremor of fear lest David should be right, for her mother consciousness bore witness to the truth of his words. So well did she know Eve's sensitive nature, that she could not bring herself to speak of her fears; she was obliged to choke them down and keep such silence as mothers alone can keep when they know how to love their children.

And Eve, on her side, had watched her mother, and saw the ravages of hidden grief with a feeling of dread; her mother was not growing old, she was failing from day to day.

Mother and daughter lived a life of generous deception, and neither was deceived. The brutal old vinegrower's speech was the last drop that filled the cup of affliction to overflowing. The words struck a chill to Mme. Chardon's heart.

"Here is my mother, monsieur," said Eve, and the Abbé, looking up, saw a white-haired woman with a face as thin and worn as the features of some aged nun, and yet grown beautiful with the calm and sweet expression that devout submission gives to the faces of women who walk by the will of God, as the saying is. Then the Abbé understood the lives of the mother and daughter, and had no more sympathy left for Lucien; he shuddered to think of all that the victims had endured.

"Mother," said Eve, drying her eyes as she spoke, "poor Lucien is not very far away, he is at Marsac."

"And why is he not here?" asked Mme. Chardon.

Then the Abbé told the whole story as Lucien had told it to him—the misery of the journey, the troubles of the last days in Paris. He described the poet's agony of mind when he heard of the havoc wrought at home by his imprudence, and his apprehension as to the reception awaiting him at Angoulême.

"He has doubts of us; has it come to this?" said Mme. Chardon.

"The unhappy young man has come back to you on foot, enduring the most terrible hardships by the way; he is prepared to enter the humblest walks in life—if so he may make reparation."

"Monsieur," Lucien's sister said, "in spite of the wrong he has done us, I love my brother still, as we love the dead body when the soul has left it; and even so, I love him more than many sisters love their brothers. He has made us poor indeed; but let him come to us, he shall share the last crust of bread, anything indeed that he has left us. Oh, if he had never left us, monsieur, we should not have lost our heart's treasure."

"And the woman who took him from us brought him back

on her carriage!" exclaimed Mme. Chardon. "He went away sitting by Mme. de Bargeton's side in her calèche, and he came back behind it."

"Can I do anything for you?" asked the good curé, seeking an opportunity to take leave.

"A wound in the purse is not fatal, they say, monsieur," said Mme. Chardon, "but the patient must be his own doctor."

"If you have sufficient influence with my father-in-law to induce him to help his son, you would save a whole family," said Eve.

"He has no belief in you, and he seemed to me to be very much exasperated against your husband," answered the old curé. He retained an impression, from the ex-pressman's rambling talk, that the Séchards' affairs were a kind of wasps' nest with which it was imprudent to meddle, and his mission being fulfilled, he went to dine with his nephew Postel. That worthy, like the rest of Angoulême, maintained that the father was in the right, and soon dissipated any little benevolence that the old gentleman was disposed to feel towards the son and his family.

"With those that squander money something may be done," concluded little Postel, "but those that make experiments are the ruin of you."

The curé went home, his curiosity was thoroughly satisfied, and this is the end and object of the exceeding interest taken in other people's business in the provinces. In the course of the evening the poet was duly informed of all that had passed in the Séchard family, and the journey was represented as a pilgrimage undertaken from motives of the purest charity.

"You have run your brother-in-law and sister into debt to the amount of ten or twelve thousand francs," said the Abbé as he drew to an end, "and nobody hereabouts has that trifling amount to lend a neighbor, my dear sir. We are not rich in Angoumois. When you spoke to me of your bills, I thought that a much smaller amount was involved."

Lucien thanked the old man for his good offices. "The promise of forgiveness which you have brought is for me a priceless gift."

Very early the next morning Lucien set out from Marsac, and reached Angoulême towards nine o'clock. He carried nothing but his walking-stick; the short jacket that he wore was considerably the worse for his journey, his black trousers were whitened with dust, and a pair of worn boots told sufficiently plainly that their owner belonged to the hapless tribe of tramps. He knew well enough that the contrast between his departure and return was bound to strike his fellow-townsmen; he did not try to hide the fact from himself. But just then, with his heart swelling beneath the oppression of remorse awakened in him by the old curé's story, he accepted his punishment for the moment, and made up his mind to brave the eyes of his acquaintances. Within himself he said, "I am behaving heroically."

Poetic temperaments of this stamp begin as their own dupes. He walked up through L'Houmeau, shame at the manner of his return struggling with the charm of old associations as he went. His heart beat quickly as he passed Postel's shop; but, very luckily for him, the only persons inside it were Léonie and her child. And yet, vanity was still so strong in him, that he could feel glad that his father's name had been painted out on the shop-front; for Postel, since his marriage, had redecorated his abode, and the word "Pharmacy" now alone appeared there, in the Paris fashion, in big letters.

When Lucien reached the steps by the Palet Gate, he felt the influence of his native air, his misfortunes no longer weighed upon him. "I shall see them again!" he said to himself, with a thrill of delight.

He reached the Place du Mûrier, and had not met a soul, a piece of luck that he scarcely hoped for, he who once had gone about his native place with a conqueror's air. Marion and Kolb, on guard at the door, flew out upon the steps, crying out, "Here he is!"

Lucien saw the familiar workshop and courtyard, and on the staircase met his mother and sister, and for a moment, while their arms were about him, all three almost forgot their

troubles. In family life we almost always compound with our misfortunes; we make a sort of bed to rest upon; and, if it is hard, hope makes it tolerable. If Lucien looked the picture of despair, poetic charm was not wanting to the picture. His face had been tanned by the sunlight of the open road, and the deep sadness visible in his features overshadowed his poet's brow. The change in him told so plainly of sufferings endured, his face was so worn by sharp misery, that no one could help pitying him. Imagination had fared forth into the world and found sad reality at the home-coming. Eve was smiling in the midst of her joy, as the saints smile upon martyrdom. The face of a young and very fair woman grows sublimely beautiful at the touch of grief; Lucien remembered the innocent girlish face that he saw last before he went to Paris, and the look of gravity that had come over it spoke so eloquently that he could not but feel a painful impression. The first quick, natural outpouring of affection was followed at once by a reaction on either side; they were afraid to speak; and when Lucien almost involuntarily looked round for another who should have been there, Eve burst into tears, and Lucien did the same, but Mme. Chardon's haggard face showed no sign of emotion. Eve rose to her feet and went downstairs, partly to spare her brother a word of reproach, partly to speak to Marion.

"Lucien is so fond of strawberries, child, we must find some strawberries for him."

"Oh, I was sure that you would want to welcome M. Lucien; you shall have a nice little breakfast and a good dinner, too."

"Lucien," said Mme. Chardon when the mother and son were left alone, "you have a great deal to repair here. You went away that we all might be proud of you; you have plunged us into want. You have all but destroyed your brother's opportunity of making a fortune that he only cared to win for the sake of his new family. Nor is this all that you have destroyed——" said the mother.

There was a dreadful pause; Lucien took his mother's reproaches in silence.

"Now begin to work," Mme. Chardon went on more gently. "You tried to revive the noble family of whom I come; I do not blame you for it. But the man who undertakes such a task needs money above all things, and must bear a high heart in him; both were wanting in your case. We believed in you once; our belief has been shaken. This was a hard-working, contented household, making its way with difficulty; you have troubled their peace. The first offence may be forgiven, but it must be the last. We are in a very difficult position here; you must be careful, and take your sister's advice, Lucien. The school of trouble is a very hard one, but Eve has learned much by her lessons; she has grown grave and thoughtful, she is a mother. In her devotion to our dear David she has taken all the family burdens upon herself; indeed, through your wrongdoing she has come to be my only comfort."

"You might be still more severe, my mother," Lucien said, as he kissed her. "I accept your forgiveness, for I will not need it a second time."

Eve came into the room, saw her brother's humble attitude, and knew that he had been forgiven. Her kindness brought a smile for him to her lips, and Lucien answered with tear-filled eyes. A living presence acts like a charm, changing the most hostile positions of lovers or of families, no matter how just the resentment. Is it that affection finds out the ways of the heart, and we love to fall into them again? Does the phenomenon come within the province of the science of magnetism? Or is it reason that tells us that we must either forgive or never see each other again? Whether the cause be referred to mental, physical, or spiritual conditions, every one knows the effect; every one has felt that the looks, the actions or gestures of the beloved awaken some vestige of tenderness in those most deeply sinned against and grievously wronged. Though it is hard for the mind to forget, though we still smart under the injury, the heart returns to its allegiance in spite of all. Poor Eve listened to her brother's confidences until breakfast-time; and whenever she looked at him,

she was no longer mistress of her eyes; in that intimate talk she could not control her voice. And with the comprehension of the conditions of literary life in Paris, she understood that the struggle had been too much for Lucien's strength. The poet's delight as he caressed his sister's child, his deep grief over David's absence, mingled with joy at seeing his country and his own folk again, the melancholy words that he let fall,—all these things combined to make that day a festival. When Marion brought in the strawberries, he was touched to see that Eve had remembered his taste in spite of her distress, and she, his sister, must make ready a room for the prodigal brother and busy herself for Lucien. It was a truce, as it were, to misery. Old Séchard himself assisted to bring about this revulsion of feeling in the two women—"You are making as much of him as if he were bringing you any amount of money!"

"And what has my brother done that we should not make much of him?" cried Eve, jealously screening Lucien.

Nevertheless, when the first expansion was over, shades of truth came out. It was not long before Lucien felt the difference between the old affection and the new. Eve respected David from the depths of her heart; Lucien was beloved for his own sake, as we love a mistress still in spite of the disasters she causes. Esteem, the very foundation on which affection is based, is the solid stuff to which affection owes, I know not what, of certainty and security by which we live; and this was lacking now between Mme. Chardon and her son, between the sister and brother. Mother and daughter did not put entire confidence in him, as they would have done if he had not lost his honor; and he felt this. The opinion expressed in d'Arthez's letter was Eve's own estimate of her brother; unconsciously she revealed it by her manner, tones, and gestures. Oh! Lucien was pitied, that was true; but as for all that he had been, the pride of the household, the great man of the family, the hero of the fireside,—all this, like their fair hopes of him, was gone, never to return. They were so afraid of his heedlessness that he was not told where David was hid-

den. Lucien wanted to see his brother; but this Eve, insensible to the caresses which accompanied his curious questionings, was not the Eve of L'Houmeau, for whom a glance from him had been an order that must be obeyed. When Lucien spoke of making reparation, and talked as though he could rescue David, Eve only answered:

"Do not interfere; we have enemies of the most treacherous and dangerous kind."

Lucien tossed his head, as who should say, "I have measured myself against Parisians," and the look in his sister's eyes said unmistakably, "Yes, but you were defeated."

"Nobody cares for me now," Lucien thought. "In the home circle, as in the world without, success is a necessity."

The poet tried to explain their lack of confidence in him; he had not been at home two days before a feeling of vexation rather than of angry bitterness gained hold on him. He applied Parisian standards to the quiet, temperate existence of the provinces, quite forgetting that the narrow, patient life of the household was the result of his own misdoings.

"They are bourgeoises, they cannot understand me," he said, setting himself apart from his sister and mother and David, now that they could no longer be deceived as to his real character and his future.

Many troubles and shocks of fortune had quickened the intuitive sense in both the women. Eve and Mme. Chardon guessed the thoughts in Lucien's inmost soul; they felt that he misjudged them; they saw him mentally isolating himself.

"Paris has changed him very much," they said between themselves. They were indeed reaping the harvest of egoism which they themselves had fostered.

It was inevitable but that the leaven should work in all three; and this most of all in Lucien, because he felt that he was so heavily to blame. As for Eve, she was just the kind of sister to beg an erring brother to "Forgive me for your trespasses;" but when the union of two souls has been as perfect since life's very beginnings, as it had been with Eve and Lucien, any blow dealt to that fair ideal is fatal. Scoundrels

can draw knives on each other and make it up again afterwards, while a look or a word is enough to sunder two lovers for ever. In the recollection of an almost perfect life of heart and heart lies the secret of many an estrangement that none can explain. Two may live together without full trust in their hearts if only their past holds no memories of complete and unclouded love; but for those who once have known that intimate life, it becomes intolerable to keep perpetual watch over looks and words. Great poets know this; Paul and Virginie die before youth is over; can we think of Paul and Virginie estranged? Let us note that, to the honor of Lucien and Eve, the grave injury done was not the source of the pain; it was entirely a matter of feeling upon either side, for the poet in fault, as for the sister who was in no way to blame. Things had reached the point when the slightest misunderstanding, or little quarrel, or a fresh disappointment in Lucien would end in final estrangement. Money difficulties may be arranged, but feelings are inexorable.

Next day Lucien received a copy of the local paper. He turned pale with pleasure when he saw his name at the head of one of the first "leaders" in that highly respectable sheet, which, like the provincial academies that Voltaire compared to a well-bred miss, was never talked about.

"Let Franche-Comté boast of giving the light to Victor Hugo, to Charles Nodier, and Cuvier," ran the article, "Brittany of producing a Chateaubriand and a Lammenais, Normandy of Casimir Delavigne, and Touraine of the author of *Éloa;* Angoumois that gave birth, in the days of Louis XIII., to our illustrious fellow-countryman Guez, better known under the name of Balzac—our Angoumois need no longer envy Limousin her Dupuytren, nor Auvergne, the country of Montlosier, nor Bordeaux, birthplace of so many great men; for we too have our poet!—The writer of the beautiful sonnets entitled the *Marguerites* unites his poet's fame to the distinction of a prose writer, for to him we also owe the magnificent romance of *The Archer of Charles IX.* Some day our

nephews will be proud to be the fellow-townsmen of Lucien Chardon, a rival of Petrarch!!!"

(The country newspapers of those days were sown with notes of admiration, as reports of English election speeches are studded with "cheers" in brackets.)

"In spite of his brilliant success in Paris, our young poet has not forgotten the Hôtel de Bargeton, the cradle of his triumphs; nor the Angoumoisin aristocracy, who first applauded his poetry; nor the fact that the wife of M. le Comte du Châtelet, our Prefect, encouraged his early footsteps in the pathway of the Muses. He has come back among us once more! All L'Houmeau was thrown into excitement yesterday by the appearance of our Lucien de Rubempré. The news of his return produced a profound sensation throughout the town. Angoulême certainly will not allow L'Houmeau to be beforehand in doing honor to the poet who in journalism and literature has so gloriously represented our town in Paris. Lucien de Rubempré, a religious and Royalist poet, has braved the fury of parties; he has come home, it is said, for repose after the fatigue of a struggle which would try the strength of an even greater intellectual athlete than a poet and a dreamer.

"There is some talk of restoring our great poet to the title of the illustrious house of de Rubempré, of which his mother, Madame Chardon, is the last survivor, and it is added that Mme. la Comtesse du Châtelet was the first to think of this eminently politic idea. The revival of an ancient and almost extinct family by young talent and newly won fame is another proof that the immortal author of the Charter still cherishes the desire expressed by the words 'Union and oblivion.'

"Our poet is staying with his sister, Mme. Séchard."

Under the heading "Angoulême" followed some items of news:—

"Our Prefect, M. le Comte du Châtelet, Gentleman in Ordinary to His Majesty, has just been appointed Extraordinary Councillor of State.

"All the authorities called yesterday on M. le Préfet.

"Mme. la Comtesse du Châtelet will receive on Thursdays.

"The Mayor of Escarbas, M. de Nègrepelisse, the representative of the younger branch of the d'Espard family, and father of Mme. du Châtelet, recently raised to the rank of a Count and Peer of France and a Commander of the Royal Order of St. Louis, has been nominated for the presidency of the electoral college of Angoulême at the forthcoming elections."

"There!" said Lucien, taking the paper to his sister. Eve read the article with attention, and returned the sheet with a thoughtful air.

"What do you say to that?" asked he, surprised at a reserve that seemed so like indifference.

"The Cointets are proprietors of that paper, dear," she said; "they put in exactly what they please, and it is not at all likely that the prefecture or the palace have forced their hands. Can you imagine that your old rival the prefect would be generous enough to sing your praises? Have you forgotten that the Cointets are suing us under Métivier's name? and that they are trying to turn David's discovery to their own advantage? I do not know the source of this paragraph, but it makes me uneasy. You used to rouse nothing but envious feeling and hatred here; a prophet has no honor in his own country, and they slandered you, and now in a moment it is all changed——"

"You do not know the vanity of country towns," said Lucien. "A whole little town in the south turned out not so long ago to welcome a young man that had won the first prize in some competition; they looked on him as a budding great man."

"Listen, dear Lucien; I do not want to preach to you, I will say everything in a very few words—you must suspect every least little thing here."

"You are right," said Lucien, but he was surprised at his sister's lack of enthusiasm. He himself was full of delight

to find his humiliating and shame-stricken return to Angoulême changed into a triumph in this way.

"You have no belief in the little fame that has cost so dear!" he said again after a long silence. Something like a storm had been gathering in his heart during the past hour. For all answer Eve gave him a look, and Lucien felt ashamed of his accusation.

Dinner was scarcely over when a messenger came from the prefecture with a note addressed to M. Chardon. That note appeared to decide the day for the poet's vanity; the world contending against the family for him had won.

"M. le Comte Sixte du Châtelet and Mme. la Comtesse du Châtelet request the honor of M. Lucien Chardon's company at dinner on the fifteenth of September. R. S .V. P."

Enclosed with the invitation there was a card—

Le Comte Sixte du Châtelet,
Gentleman of the Bedchamber, Prefect of the Charente,
Councillor of State.

"You are in favor," said old Séchard; "they are talking about you in the town as if you were somebody! Angoulême and L'Houmeau are disputing as to which shall twist wreaths for you."

"Eve, dear," Lucien whispered to his sister, "I am exactly in the same condition as I was before in L'Houmeau when Mme. de Bargeton sent me the first invitation—I have not a dress suit for the prefect's dinner-party."

"Do you really mean to accept the invitation?" Eve asked in alarm, and a dispute sprang up between the brother and sister. Eve's provincial good sense told her that if you appear in society, it must be with a smiling face and faultless costume. "What will come of the prefect's dinner?" she wondered. "What has Lucien to do with the great people of Angoulême? Are they plotting something against him?" but she kept these thoughts to herself.

Lucien spoke the last word at bedtime: "You do not know

my influence. The prefect's wife stands in fear of a journalist; and besides, Louise de Nègrepelisse lives on in the Comtesse du Châtelet, and a woman with her influence can rescue David. I am going to tell her about my brother's invention, and it would be a mere nothing to her to obtain a subsidy of ten thousand francs from the Government for him."

At eleven o'clock that night the whole household was awakened by the town band, reinforced by the military band from the barracks. The Place du Mûrier was full of people. The young men of Angoulême were giving Lucien Chardon de Rubempré a serenade. Lucien went to his sister's window and made a speech after the last performance.

"I thank my fellow-townsmen for the honor that they do me," he said in the midst of a great silence; "I will strive to be worthy of it; they will pardon me if I say no more; I am so much moved by this incident that I cannot speak."

"Hurrah for the writer of *The Archer of Charles IX.!* . . . Hurrah for the poet of the *Marguerites!* . . . Long live Lucien de Rubempré!"

After these three salvos, taken up by some few voices, three crowns and a quantity of bouquets were adroitly flung into the room through the open window. Ten minutes later the Place du Mûrier was empty, and silence prevailed in the streets.

"I would rather have ten thousand francs," said old Séchard, fingering the bouquets and garlands with a satirical expression. "You gave them daisies, and they give you posies in return; you deal in flowers."

"So that is your opinion of the honors shown me by my fellow-townsmen, is it?" asked Lucien. All his melancholy had left him, his face was radiant with good humor. "If you knew mankind, Papa Séchard, you would see that no moment in one's life comes twice. Such a triumph as this can only be due to genuine enthusiasm! . . . My dear mother, my good sister, this wipes out many mortifications."

Lucien kissed them; for when joy overflows like a torrent flood, we are fain to pour it out into a friend's heart. "When

an author is intoxicated with success, he will hug his porter if there is nobody else on hand," according to Bixiou.

"Why, darling, why are you crying?" he said, looking into Eve's face. "Ah! I know, you are crying for joy!"

"Oh me!" said Eve, when she and her mother were left alone in the bedroom, "there is a pretty woman of the worst kind in a poet, I think."

"You are right," said her mother, shaking her head as she spoke. "Lucien has forgotten everything already; not merely his own troubles, but ours as well."

Mother and daughter separated, and neither dared to utter all her thoughts.

In a country eaten up with the kind of social insubordination disguised by the word Equality, a triumph of any kind whatsoever is a sort of miracle which requires, like some other miracles for that matter, the co-operation of skilled labor. Out of ten ovations offered to ten living men, selected for this distinction by a grateful country, you may be quite sure that nine are given from considerations connected as remotely as possible with the conspicuous merits of the renowned recipient. What was Voltaire's apotheosis at the Théâtre-Français but the triumph of eighteenth century philosophy? A triumph in France means that everybody else feels that he is adorning his own temples with the crown that he sets on the idol's head.

The women's presentiments proved correct. The distinguished provincial's reception was antipathetic to Angoumoisin immobility; it was too evidently got up by some interested persons or by enthusiastic stage mechanics, a suspicious combination. Eve, moreover, like most of her sex, was distrustful by instinct, even when reason failed to justify her suspicions to herself. "Who can be so fond of Lucien that he could rouse the town for him?" she wondered as she fell asleep. "The *Marguerites* are not published yet; how can they compliment him on a future success?"

The ovation was, in fact, the work of Petit-Claud.

Petit-Claud had dined with Mme. de Senonches, for the

first time, on the evening of the day that brought the curé of Marsac to Angoulême with the news of Lucien's return. That same evening he made formal application for the hand of Mlle. de la Haye. It was a family dinner, one of the solemn occasions marked not so much by the number of the guests as by the splendor of their toilettes. Consciousness of the performance weighs upon the family party, and every countenance looks significant. Françoise was on exhibition. Mme. de Senonches had sported her most elaborate costume for the occasion; M. du Hautoy wore a black coat; M. de Senonches had returned from his visit to the Pimentels on the receipt of a note from his wife, informing him that Mme. du Châtelet was to appear at their house for the first time since her arrival, and that a suitor in form for Françoise would appear on the scenes. Boniface Cointet also was there, in his best maroon coat of clerical cut, with a diamond pin worth six thousand francs displayed in his shirt frill—the revenge of the rich merchant upon a poverty-stricken aristocracy.

Petit-Claud himself, scoured and combed, had carefully removed his gray hairs, but he could not rid himself of his wizened air. The puny little man of law, tightly buttoned into his clothes, reminded you of a torpid viper; for if hope had brought a spark of life into his magpie eyes, his face was icily rigid, and so well did he assume an air of gravity, that an ambitious public prosecutor could not have been more dignified.

Mme. de Senonches had told her intimate friends that her ward would meet her betrothed that evening, and that Mme. du Châtelet would appear at the Hôtel de Senonches for the first time; and having particularly requested them to keep these matters secret, she expected to find her rooms crowded. The Comte and Comtesse du Châtelet had left cards everywhere officially, but they meant the honor of a personal visit to play a part in their policy. So aristocratic Angoulême was in such a prodigious ferment of curiosity, that certain of the Chandour camp proposed to go to the Hôtel de Bargeton that evening. (They persistently declined to call the house by its new name.)

Proofs of the Countess' influence had stirred up ambition in many quarters; and not only so, it was said that the lady had changed so much for the better that everybody wished to see and judge for himself. Petit-Claud learned great news on the way to the house; Cointet told him that Zéphirine had asked leave to present her dear Françoise's betrothed to the Countess, and that the Countess had granted the favor. Petit-Claud had seen at once that Lucien's return put Louise de Nègrepelisse in a false position; and now, in a moment, he flattered himself that he saw a way to take advantage of it.

M. and Mme. de Senonches had undertaken such heavy engagements when they bought the house, that, in provincial fashion, they thought it imprudent to make any changes in it. So when Madame du Châtelet was announced, Zéphirine went up to her with—"Look, dear Louise, you are still in your old home!" indicating, as she spoke, the little chandelier, the paneled wainscot, and the furniture, which once had dazzled Lucien.

"I wish least of all to remember it, dear," Madame la Préfète answered graciously, looking round on the assemblage.

Every one admitted that Louise de Nègrepelisse was not like the same woman. If the provincial had undergone a change, the woman herself had been transformed by those eighteen months in Paris, by the first happiness of a still recent second marriage, and the kind of dignity that power confers. The Comtesse du Châtelet bore the same resemblance to Mme. de Bargeton that a girl of twenty bears to her mother.

She wore a charming cap of lace and flowers, fastened by a diamond-headed pin; the ringlets that half hid the contours of her face added to her look of youth, and suited her style of beauty. Her foulard gown, designed by the celebrated Victorine, with a pointed bodice, exquisitely fringed, set off her figure to advantage; and a silken lace scarf, adroitly thrown about a too long neck, partly concealed her shoulders. She played with the dainty scent-bottle, hung by a chain from her bracelet; she carried her fan and her handkerchief with ease—pretty trifles, as dangerous as a sunken reef for the provincial

dame. The refined taste shown in the least details, the carriage and manner modeled upon Mme. d'Espard, revealed a profound study of the Faubourg Saint-Germain.

As for the elderly beau of the Empire, he seemed since his marriage to have followed the example of the species of melon that turns from green to yellow in a night. All the youth that Sixte had lost seemed to appear in his wife's radiant countenance; provincial pleasantries passed from ear to ear, circulating the more readily because the women were furious at the new superiority of the sometime queen of Angoulême; and the persistent intruder paid the penalty of his wife's offence.

The rooms were almost as full as on that memorable evening of Lucien's readings from Chénier. Some faces were missing: M. de Chandour and Amélie, M. de Pimentel and the Rastignacs—and M. de Bargeton was no longer there; but the Bishop came, as before, with his vicars-general in his train. Petit-Claud was much impressed by the sight of the great world of Angoulême. Four months ago he had no hope of entering the circle, to-day he felt his detestation of "the classes" sensibly diminished. He thought the Comtesse du Châtelet a most fascinating woman. "It is she who can procure me the appointment of deputy public prosecutor," he said to himself.

Louise chatted for an equal length of time with each of the women; her tone varied with the importance of the person addressed and the position taken up by the latter with regard to her journey to Paris with Lucien. The evening was half over when she withdrew to the boudoir with the Bishop. Zéphirine came over to Petit-Claud, and laid her hand on his arm. His heart beat fast as his hostess brought him to the room where Lucien's troubles first began, and were now about to come to a crisis.

"This is M. Petit-Claud, dear; I recommend him to you the more warmly because anything that you may do for him will doubtless benefit my ward."

"You are an attorney, are you not, monsieur?" said the august Nègrepelisse, scanning Petit-Claud.

"Alas! yes, *Madame la Comtesse.*" (The son of the tailor in L'Houmeau had never once had occasion to use those three words in his life before, and his mouth was full of them.) "But it rests with you, Madame la Comtesse, whether or no I shall act for the Crown. M. Milaud is going to Nevers, it is said——"

"But a man is usually second deputy and then first deputy, is he not?" broke in the Countess. "I should like to see you in the first deputy's place at once. But I should like first to have some assurance of your devotion to the cause of our legitimate sovereigns, to religion, and more especially to M. de Villèle, if I am to interest myself on your behalf to obtain the favor."

Petit-Claud came nearer. "Madame," he said in her ear, "I am the man to yield the King absolute obedience."

"That is just what *we* want to-day," said the Countess, drawing back a little to make him understand that she had no wish for promises given under his breath. "So long as you satisfy Mme. de Senonches, you can count upon me," she added, with a royal movement of her fan.

Petit-Claud looked toward the door of the boudoir, and saw Cointet standing there. "Madame," he said, "Lucien is here, in Angoulême."

"Well, sir?" asked the Countess, in tones that would have put an end to all power of speech in an ordinary man.

"Mme. la Comtesse does not understand," returned Petit-Claud, bringiug out that most respectful formula again. "How does Mme. la Comtesse wish that the great man of her making should be received in Angoulême? There is no middle course; he must be received or despised here."

This was a dilemma to which Louise de Nègrepelisse had never given a thought; it touched her closely, yet rather for the sake of the past than of the future. And as for Petit-Claud, his plan for arresting David Séchard depended upon the lady's actual feelings towards Lucien. He waited.

"M. Petit-Claud," said the Countess, with haughty dignity, "you mean to be on the side of the Government. Learn that

the first principle of government is this—never to have been in the wrong, and that the instinct of power and the sense of dignity is even stronger in women than in governments."

"That is just what I thought, madame," he answered quickly, observing the Countess meanwhile with attention the more profound because it was scarcely visible. "Lucien came here in the depths of misery. But if he must receive an ovation, I can compel him to leave Angoulême by the means of the ovation itself. His sister and brother-in-law, David Séchard, are hard pressed for debts."

In the Countess' haughty face there was a swift, barely perceptible change; it was not satisfaction, but the repression of satisfaction. Surprised that Petit-Claud should have guessed her wishes, she gave him a glance as she opened her fan, and Françoise de la Haye's entrance at that moment gave her time to find an answer.

"It will not be long before you are public prosecutor, monsieur," she said, with a significant smile. That speech did not commit her in any way, but it was explicit enough. Françoise had come in to thank the Countess.

"Oh! madame, then I shall owe the happiness of my life to you," she exclaimed, bending girlishly to add in the Countess' ear, "To marry a petty provincial attorney would be like being burnt by slow fires."

It was Francis, with his knowledge of officialdom, who had prompted Zéphirine to make this set upon Louise.

"In the very earliest days after promotion," so the ex-consul-general told his fair friend, "everybody, prefect, or monarch, or man of business, is burning to exert his influence for his friends; but a patron soon finds out the inconveniences of patronage, and then turns from fire to ice. Louise will do more just now for Petit-Claud than she would do for her husband in three months' time."

"Madame la Comtesse is thinking of all that our poet's triumph entails?" continued Petit-Claud. "She should receive Lucien before there is an end of the nine-days' wonder."

The Countess terminated the audience with a bow, and rose

to speak with Mme. de Pimentel, who came to the boudoir. The news of old Nègrepelisse's elevation to a marquisate had greatly impressed the Marquise; she judged it expedient to be amiable to a woman so clever as to rise the higher for an apparent fall.

"Do tell me, dear, why you took the trouble to put your father in the House of Peers?" said the Marquise, in the course of a little confidential conversation, in which she bent the knee before the superiority of "her dear Louise."

"They were all the more ready to grant the favor because my father has no son to succeed him, dear, and his vote will always be at the disposal of the Crown; but if we should have sons, I quite expect that my oldest will succeed to his grandfather's name, title, and peerage."

Mme. de Pimentel saw, to her annoyance, that it was idle to expect a mother ambitious for children not yet in existence to further her own private designs of raising M. de Pimentel to a peerage.

"I have the Countess," Petit-Claud told Cointet when they came away. "I can promise you your partnership. I shall be deputy prosecutor before the month is out, and Séchard will be in your power. Try to find a buyer for my connection; it has come to be the first in Angoulême in my hands during the last five months——"

"Once put *you* on the horse, and there is no need to do more," said Cointet, half jealous of his own work.

The causes of Lucien's triumphant reception in his native town must now be plain to everybody. Louise du Châtelet followed the example of that King of France who left the Duke of Orléans unavenged; she chose to forget the insults received in Paris by Mme. de Bargeton. She would patronize Lucien, and overwhelming him with her patronage, would completely crush him and get rid of him by fair means. Petit-Claud knew the whole tale of the cabals in Paris through town gossip, and shrewdly guessed how a woman must hate the man who would not love when she was fain of his love.

The ovation justified the past of Louise de Nègrepelisse.

The next day Petit-Claud appeared at Mme. Séchard's house, heading a deputation of six young men of the town, all of them Lucien's schoolfellows. He meant to finish his work, to intoxicate Lucien completely, and to have him in his power. Lucien's old schoolfellows at the Angoulême grammar-school wished to invite the author of the *Marguerites* and *The Archer of Charles IX.* to a banquet given in honor of the great man arisen from their ranks.

"Come, this is your doing, Petit-Claud!" exclaimed Lucien.

"Your return has stirred our conceit," said Petit-Claud; "we made it a point of honor to get up a subscription, and we will have a tremendous affair for you. The masters and the headmaster will be there, and, at the present rate, we shall, no doubt, have the authorities too."

"For what day?" asked Lucien.

"Sunday next."

"That is quite out of the question," said Lucien. "I cannot accept an invitation for the next ten days, but then I will gladly——"

"Very well," said Petit-Claud, "so be it then, in ten days' time."

Lucien behaved charmingly to his old schoolfellows, and they regarded him with almost respectful admiration. He talked away very wittily for half an hour; he had been set upon a pedestal, and wished to justify the opinion of his fellow-townsmen; so he stood with his hands thrust into his pockets, and held forth from the height to which he had been raised. He was modest and good-natured, as befitted genius in dressing-gown and slippers; he was the athlete, wearied by a wrestling bout with Paris, and disenchanted above all things; he congratulated the comrades who had never left the dear old province, and so forth, and so forth. They were delighted with him. He took Petit-Claud aside, and asked him for the real truth about David's affairs, reproaching him for allowing his brother-in-law to go into hiding, and tried to match his wits against the little lawyer. Petit-Claud made an effort over himself, and gave his acquaintance to under-

stand that he (Petit-Claud) was only an insignificant little country attorney, with no sort of craft nor subtlety.

The whole machinery of modern society is so infinitely more complex than in ancient times, that the subdivision of human faculty is the result. The great men of the days of old were perforce universal geniuses, appearing at rare intervals like lighted torches in an antique world. In the course of ages the intellect began to work on special lines, but the great man still could "take all knowledge for his province." A man "full cautelous," as was said of Louis XI., for instance, could apply that special faculty in every direction, but to-day the single quality is subdivided, and every profession has its special craft. A peasant or a pettifogging solicitor might very easily overreach an astute diplomate over a bargain in some remote country village; and the wiliest journalist may prove the veriest simpleton in a piece of business. Lucien could but be a puppet in the hands of Petit-Claud.

That guileful practitioner, as might have been expected, had written the article himself; Angoulême and L'Houmeau, thus put on their mettle, thought it incumbent upon them to pay honor to Lucien. His fellow-citizens, assembled in the Place du Mûrier, were Cointets' workpeople from the paper-mills and printing-house, with a sprinkling of Lucien's old schoolfellows and the clerks in the employ of Messieurs Petit-Claud and Cachan. As for the attorney himself, he was once more Lucien's chum of old days; and he thought, not without reason, that before very long he should learn David's whereabouts in some unguarded moment. And if David came to grief through Lucien's fault, the poet would find Angoulême too hot to hold him. Petit-Claud meant to secure his hold; he posed, therefore, as Lucien's inferior.

"What better could I have done?" he said accordingly. "My old chum's sister was involved, it is true, but there are some positions that simply cannot be maintained in a court of law. David asked me on the first of June to ensure him a quiet life for three months; he had a quiet life until September, and even so I have kept his property out of his creditors' power, for I shall gain my case in the Court-Royal;

I contend that the wife is a privileged creditor, and her claim is absolute, unless there is evidence of intent to defraud. As for you, you, you have come back in misfortune, but you are a genius."—(Lucien turned about as if the incense were burned too close to his face.)—"Yes, my dear fellow, a *genius*. I have read your *Archer of Charles IX.;* it is more than a romance, it is literature. Only two living men could have written the preface—Chateaubriand and Lucien."

Lucien accepted the eulogium, and did not think it necessary to mention that d'Arthez had written the preface. Ninety-nine writers out of a hundred would have done the same.

"Well, nobody here seemed to have heard of you!" Petit-Claud continued, with apparent indignation. "When I saw the general indifference, I made up my mind to change all that. I wrote that article in the paper——"

"What? Did you write it?" exclaimed Lucien.

"I myself. Angoulême and L'Houmeau were stirred to rivalry; I arranged for a meeting of your old schoolfellows, and got up yesterday's serenade; and when once the enthusiasm began to grow, we started a committee for the dinner. 'If David is in hiding,' said I to myself, 'Lucien shall be crowned at any rate.' And I have done even better than that," continued Petit-Claud; "I have seen the Comtesse du Châtelet and made her understand that she owes it to herself to extricate David from his position; she can do it, and she ought to do it. If David has really discovered the secret of which he spoke to me, the Government ought to lend him a hand, it would not ruin the Government; and think what a fine thing for a prefect to have half the credit of the great invention for the well-timed help. It would set people talking about him as an enlightened administrator.—Your sister has taken fright at our musketry practice; she was scared of the smoke. A battle in the law-courts costs quite as much as a battle on the field; but David has held his ground, he has his secret. They cannot stop him, and they will not pull him up now."

"Thanks, my dear fellow; I see that I can take you into my confidence; you shall help me to carry out my plan."

Petit-Claud looked at Lucien, and his gimlet face was a point of interrogation.

"I intend to rescue Séchard," Lucien said, with a certain importance. "I brought his misfortunes upon him; I mean to make full reparation. . . . I have more influence over Louise——"

"Who is Louise?"

"The Comtesse du Châtelet!"

Petit-Claud started.

"I have more influence over her than she herself suspects," said Lucien; "only, my dear fellow, if I can do something with your authorities here, I have no decent clothes."—Petit-Claud made as though he would offer his purse.

"Thank you," said Lucien, grasping Petit-Claud's hand. "In ten days' time I will pay a visit to the Countess and return your call."

They shook hands like old comrades, and separated.

"He ought to be a poet," said Petit-Claud to himself; "he is quite mad."

"There are no friends like one's school friends; it is a true saying," Lucien thought as he went to find his sister.

"What can Petit-Claud have promised to do that you should be so friendly with him, my Lucien?" asked Eve. "Be on your guard with him."

"With *him?*" cried Lucien. "Listen, Eve," he continued, seeming to bethink himself; "you have no faith in me now; you do not trust me, so it is not likely you will trust Petit-Claud; but in ten or twelve days you will change your mind," he added, with a touch of fatuity. And he went to his room, and indited the following epistle to Lousteau:—

Lucien to Lousteau.

"My Friend,—Of the pair of us, I alone can remember that bill for a thousand francs that I once lent you; and I know how things will be with you when you open this letter

too well, alas! not to add immediately that I do not expect to be repaid in current coin of the realm; no, I will take it in credit from you, just as one would ask Florine for pleasure. We have the same tailor; therefore, you can order a complete outfit for me on the shortest possible notice. I am not precisely wearing Adam's costume, but I cannot show myself here. To my astonishment, the honors paid by the departments to a Parisian celebrity awaited me. I am the hero of a banquet, for all the world as if I were a Deputy of the Left. Now, after that, do you understand that I must have a black coat? Promise to pay; have it put down to your account, try the advertisement dodge, rehearse an unpublished scene between Don Juan and M. Dimanche, for I must have a gala suit at all costs. I have nothing, nothing but rags: start with that; it is August, the weather is magnificent, *ergo* see that I receive by the end of the week a charming morning suit, dark bronze-green jacket, and three waistcoats, one a brimstone yellow, one a plaid, and the third must be white; furthermore, let there be three pairs of trousers of the most fetching kind—one pair of white English stuff, one pair of nankeen, and a third of thin black kerseymere; lastly, send a black dress-coat and a black satin waistcoat. If you have picked up another Florine somewhere, I beg her good offices for two cravats. So far this is nothing; I count upon you and your skill in these matters; I am not much afraid of the tailor. But the ingenuity of poverty, assuredly the most active of all poisons at work in the system of man (*id est* the Parisian), an ingenuity that would catch Satan himself napping, has failed so far to discover a way to obtain a hat on credit!—How many a time, my dear friend, have we deplored this! When one of us shall bring a hat that costs a thousand francs into fashion, then, and not till then, can we afford to wear them; until that day comes we are bound to have cash enough in our pockets to pay for a hat. Ah! what an ill turn the Comédie-Française did us with, 'Lafleur, you will put gold in my pockets!'

"I write with a profound sense of all the difficulties involved by the demand. Enclose with the above a pair of boots, a pair of pumps, a hat, half a dozen pairs of gloves. 'Tis asking the impossible; I know it. But what is a literary life but a periodical recurrence of the impossible? Work the miracle, write a long article, or play some small scurvy trick, and I will hold your debt as fully discharged—this is all I say to you. It is a debt of honor after all, my dear fellow, and due these twelve months; you ought to blush for yourself if you have any blushes left.

"Joking apart, my dear Lousteau, I am in serious difficulties, as you may judge for yourself when I tell you that Mme. de Bargeton has married Châtelet, and Châtelet is prefect of Angoulême. The precious pair can do a good deal for my brother-in-law; he is in hiding at this moment on account of that letter of exchange, and the horrid business is all my doing. So it is a question of appearing before Mme. la Préfète and regaining my influence at all costs. It is shocking, is it not, that David Séchard's fate should hang upon a neat pair of shoes, a pair of open-worked gray silk stockings (mind you, remember them), and a new hat? I shall give out that I am sick and ill, and take to my bed, like Duvicquet, to save the trouble of replying to the pressing invitations of my fellow-townsmen. My fellow-townsmen, dear boy, have treated me to a fine serenade. *My fellow-townsmen*, forsooth; I begin to wonder how many fools go to make up that word, since I learned that two or three of my old schoolfellows worked up the capital of the Angoumois to this pitch of enthusiasm.

"If you could contrive to slip a few lines as to my reception in among the news items, I should be several inches taller for it here; and besides, I should make Mme. la Préfète feel that, if I have not friends, I have some credit, at any rate, with the Parisian press. I give up none of my hopes, and I will return the compliment. If you want a good, solid, substantial article for some magazine or other, I have time enough now to think something out. I only say the word,

my dear friend; I count upon you as you may count upon me, and I am yours sincerely.

"LUCIEN DE R."

"P. S.—Send the things to the coach office to wait until called for."

Lucien held up his head again. In this mood he wrote the letter, and as he wrote his thoughts went back to Paris. He had spent six days in the provinces, and the uneventful quietness of provincial life had already entered into his soul; his mind returned to those dear old miserable days with a vague sense of regret. The Comtesse du Châtelet filled his thoughts for a whole week; and at last he came to attach so much importance to his reappearance, that he hurried down to the coach office in L'Houmeau after nightfall in a perfect agony of suspense, like a woman who has set her last hopes upon a new dress, and waits in despair until it arrives.

"Ah! Lousteau, all your treasons are forgiven," he said to himself, as he eyed the packages, and knew from the shape of them that everything had been sent. Inside the hatbox he found a note from Lousteau:—

FLORINE'S DRAWING-ROOM.

"MY DEAR BOY,—The tailor behaved very well; but as thy profound retrospective glance led thee to forebode, the cravats, the hats, and the silk hosen perplexed our souls, for there was nothing in our purse to be perplexed thereby. As said Blondet, so say we; there is a fortune awaiting the establishment which will supply young men with inexpensive articles on credit; for when we do not pay in the beginning, we pay dear in the end. And by the by, did not the great Napoleon, who missed a voyage to the Indies for want of boots, say that, 'If a thing is easy, it is never done?' So everything went well—except the boots. I beheld a vision of thee, fully dressed, but without a hat! appareled in waistcoats, yet shoeless! and bethought me of sending a pair of moccasins given to Florine as a curiosity by an American. Florine offered

the huge sum of forty francs, that we might try our luck at play for you. Nathan, Blondet, and I had such luck (as we were not playing for ourselves) that we were rich enough to ask La Torpille, des Lepaulx's sometime 'rat,' to supper. Frascati certainly owed us that much. Florine undertook the shopping, and added three fine shirts to the purchases. Nathan sends you a cane. Blondet, who won three hundred francs, is sending you a gold chain; and the gold watch, the size of a forty-franc piece, is from La Torpille; some idiot gave the thing to her, and it will not go. 'Trumpery rubbish,' she says, 'like the man that owned it.' Bixiou, who came to find us up at the *Rocher de Cancale,* wished to enclose a bottle of Portugal water in the package. Said our first comic man, 'If this can make him happy, let him have it!' growling it out in a deep bass voice with the bourgeois pomposity that he can act to the life. Which things, my dear boy, ought to prove to you how much we care for our friends in adversity. Florine, whom I have had the weakness to forgive, begs you to send us an article on Nathan's last. Fare thee well, my son. I can only commiserate you on finding yourself back in the same box from which you emerged when you discovered your old comrade.

"ÉTIENNE L."

"Poor fellows! They have been gambling for me," said Lucien; he was quite touched by the letter. A waft of the breeze from an unhealthy country, from the land where one has suffered most, may seem to bring the odors of Paradise; and in a dull life there is an indefinable sweetness in memories of past pain.

Eve was struck dumb with amazement when her brother came down in his new clothes. She did not recognize him.

"Now I can walk out in Beaulieu," he cried; they shall not say it of me that I came back in rags. Look, here is a watch which I shall return to you, for it is mine; and, like its owner, it is erratic in its ways."

"What a child he is!" exclaimed Eve. "It is impossible to bear you any grudge."

"Then do you imagine, my dear girl, that I sent for all this with the silly idea of shining in Angoulême? I don't care *that* for Angoulême" (twirling his cane with the engraved gold knob). "I intend to repair the wrong I have done, and this is my battle array."

Lucien's success in this kind was his one real triumph; but the triumph, be it said, was immense. If admiration freezes some people's tongues, envy loosens at least as many more, and if women lost their heads over Lucien, men slandered him. He might have cried, in the words of the songwriter, "I thank thee, my coat!" He left two cards at the prefecture, and another upon Petit-Claud. The next day, the day of the banquet, the following paragraph appeared under the heading "Angoulême" in the Paris newspapers:—

"ANGOULÊME.

"The return of the author of *The Archer of Charles IX.* has been the signal for an ovation which does equal honor to the town and to M. Lucien de Rubempré, the young poet who has made so brilliant a beginning; the writer of the one French historical novel not written in the style of Scott, and of a preface which may be called a literary event. The town hastened to offer him a patriotic banquet on his return. The name of the recently-appointed prefect is associated with the public demonstration in honor of the author of the *Marguerites,* whose talent received such warm encouragement from Mme. du Châtelet at the outset of his career."

In France, when once the impulse is given, nobody can stop. The colonel of the regiment offered to put his band at the disposal of the committee. The landlord of the *Bell* (renowned for truffled turkeys, despatched in the most wonderful porcelain jars to the uttermost parts of the earth), the famous innkeeper of L'Houmeau, would supply the repast. At five o'clock some forty persons, all in state and festival array, were assembled in his largest hall, decorated with hangings, crowns

of laurel, and bouquets. The effect was superb. A crowd of onlookers, some hundred persons, attracted for the most part by the military band in the yard, represented the citizens of Angoulême.

Petit-Claud went to the window. "All Angoulême is here," he said, looking out.

"I can make nothing of this," remarked little Postel to his wife (they had come out to hear the band play). "Why, the prefect and the receiver-general, and the colonel and the superintendent of the powder factory, and our mayor and deputy, and the headmaster of the school, and the manager of the foundry at Ruelle, and the public prosecutor, M. Milaud, and all the authorities, have just gone in!"

The band struck up as they sat down to table with variations on the air *Vive le roy, vive la France,* a melody which has never found popular favor. It was then five o'clock in the evening; it was eight o'clock before dessert was served. Conspicuous among the sixty-five dishes appeared an Olympus in confectionery, surmounted by a figure of France modeled in chocolate, to give the signal for toasts and speeches.

"Gentlemen," called the prefect, rising to his feet, "the King! the rightful ruler of France! To what do we owe the generation of poets and thinkers who maintain the sceptre of letters in the hands of France, if not to the peace which the Bourbons have restored——"

"Long live the King!" cried the assembled guests (ministerialists predominated).

The venerable headmaster rose.

"To the hero of the day," he said, "to the young poet who combines the gift of the *prosateur* with the charm and poetic faculty of Petrarch in that sonnet-form which Boileau declares to be so difficult."

Cheers.

The colonel rose next. "Gentlemen, to the Royalist! for the hero of this evening had the courage to fight for sound principles!"

"Bravo!" cried the prefect, leading the applause.

Then Petit-Claud called upon all Lucien's schoolfellows there present. "To the pride of the grammar-school of Angoulême! to the venerable headmaster so dear to us all, to whom the acknowledgment for some part of our triumph is due!"

The old headmaster dried his eyes; he had not expected this toast. Lucien rose to his feet, the whole room was suddenly silent, and the poet's face grew white. In that pause the old headmaster, who sat on his left, crowned him with a laurel wreath. A round of applause followed, and when Lucien spoke it was with tears in his eyes and a sob in his throat.

"He is drunk," remarked the attorney-general-designate to his neighbor, Petit-Claud.

"It is not the wine," returned Petit-Claud.

"My dear fellow-countrymen, my dear comrades," Lucien said at last, "I could wish that all France might witness this scene; for thus men rise to their full stature, and in such ways as these our land demands great deeds and noble work of us. And when I think of the little that I have done, and of this great honor shown to me to-day, I can only feel confused and impose upon the future the task of justifying your reception of me. The recollection of this moment will give me renewed strength for efforts to come. Permit me to indicate for your homage my earliest muse and protectress, and to associate her name with that of my birthplace; so—to the Comtesse du Châtelet and the noble town of Angoulême!"

"He came out of that pretty well!" said the public prosecutor, nodding approval; "our speeches were all prepared, and his was improvised."

At ten o'clock the party began to break up, and little knots of guests went home together. David Séchard heard the unwonted music.

"What is going on in L'Houmeau?" he asked of Basine.

"They are giving a dinner to your brother-in-law, Lucien——"

"I know that he would feel sorry to miss me there," he said.

At midnight Petit-Claud walked home with Lucien. As they reached the Place du Mûrier, Lucien said, "Come life, come death, we are friends, my dear fellow."

"My marriage contract," said the lawyer, "with Mlle. Françoise de la Haye will be signed to-morrow at Mme. de Senonches' house; do me the pleasure of coming. Mme. de Senonches implored me to bring you, and you will meet Mme. du Châtelet; they are sure to tell her of your speech, and she will feel flattered by it."

"I knew what I was about," said Lucien.

"Oh! you will save David."

"I am sure I shall," the poet replied.

Just at that moment David appeared as if by magic in the Place du Mûrier. This was how it had come about. He felt that he was in a rather difficult position; his wife insisted that Lucien must neither go to David nor know of his hiding-place; and Lucien all the while was writing the most affectionate letters, saying that in a few days' time all should be set right; and even as Basine Clerget explained the reason why the band played, she put two letters into his hands. The first was from Eve.

"DEAREST," she wrote, "do as if Lucien were not here; do not trouble yourself in the least; our whole security depends upon the fact that your enemies cannot find you; get that idea firmly into your head. I have more confidence in Kolb and Marion and Basine than in my own brother; such is my misfortune. Alas! poor Lucien is not the ingenuous and tender-hearted poet whom we used to know; and it is simply because he is trying to interfere on your behalf, and because he imagines that he can discharge our debts (and this from pride, my David), that I am afraid of him. Some fine clothes have been sent from Paris for him, and five gold pieces in a pretty purse. He gave the money to me, and we are living on it.

"We have one enemy the less. Your father has gone, thanks to Petit-Claud. Petit-Claud unraveled his designs, and put an end to them at once by telling him that you would do

nothing without consulting him, and that he (Petit-Claud) would not allow you to concede a single point in the matter of the invention until you had been promised an indemnity of thirty thousand francs; fifteen thousand to free you from embarrassment, and fifteen thousand more to be yours in any case, whether your invention succeeds or no. I cannot understand Petit-Claud. I embrace you, dear, a wife's kiss for her husband in trouble. Our little Lucien is well. How strange it is to watch him grow rosy and strong, like a flower, in these stormy days! Mother prays God for you now, as always, and sends love only less tender than mine.—Your EVE."

As a matter of fact, Petit-Claud and the Cointets had taken fright at old Séchard's peasant shrewdness, and got rid of him so much the more easily because it was now vintage time at Marsac. Eve's letter enclosed another from Lucien:—

"MY DEAR DAVID,—Everything is going well. I am armed *cap-à-pie;* to-day I open the campaign, and in forty-eight hours I shall have made great progress. How glad I shall be to embrace you when you are free again and my debts are all paid! My mother and sister persist in mistrusting me; their suspicion wounds me to the quick. As if I did not know already that you are hiding with Basine, for every time that Basine comes to the house I hear news of you and receive answers to my letters; and besides, it is plain that my sister could not find any one else to trust. It hurts me cruelly to think that I shall be so near you to-day, and yet that you will not be present at this banquet in my honor. I owe my little triumph to the vainglory of Angoulême; in a few days it will be quite forgotten, and you alone would have taken a real pleasure in it. But, after all, in a little while you will pardon everything to one who counts it more than all the triumphs in the world to be your brother, LUCIEN."

Two forces tugged sharply at David's heart; he adored his wife; and if he held Lucien in somewhat less esteem, his

friendship was scarcely diminished. In solitude our feelings have unrestricted play; and a man preoccupied like David, with all-absorbing thoughts, will give way to impulses for which ordinary life would have provided a sufficient counterpoise. As he read Lucien's letter to the sound of military music, and heard of this unlooked-for recognition, he was deeply touched by that expression of regret. He had known how it would be. A very slight expression of feeling appeals irresistibly to a sensitive soul, for they are apt to credit others with like depths. How should the drop fall unless the cup were full to the brim?

So at midnight, in spite of all Basine's entreaties, David must go to see Lucien.

"Nobody will be out in the streets at this time of night," he said; "I shall not be seen, and they cannot arrest me. Even if I should meet people, I can make use of Kolb's way of going into hiding. And besides, it is so intolerably long since I saw my wife and child."

The reasoning was plausible enough; Basine gave way, and David went. Petit-Claud was just taking leave as he came up, and at his cry of *"Lucien!"* the two brothers flung their arms about each other with tears in their eyes.

Life holds not many moments such as these. Lucien's heart went out in response to this friendship for its own sake. There was never question of debtor and creditor between them, and the offender met with no reproaches save his own. David, generous and noble that he was, he was longing to bestow pardon; he meant first of all to read Lucien a lecture, and scatter the clouds that overspread the love of the brother and sister; and with these ends in view, the lack of money and its consequent dangers disappeared entirely from his mind.

"Go home," said Petit-Claud, addressing his client; "take advantage of your imprudence to see your wife and child again, at any rate; and you must not be seen, mind you!—How unlucky!" he added, when he was alone in the Place du Mûrier. "If only Cérizet were here——"

The buildings magniloquently styled the Angoulême Law

Courts were then in process of construction. Petit-Claud muttered these words to himself as he passed by the hoardings, and heard a tap upon the boards, and a voice issuing from a crack between two planks.

"Here I am," said Cérizet; "I saw David coming out of L'Houmeau. I was beginning to have my suspicions about his retreat, and now I am sure; and I know where to have him. But I want to know something of Lucien's plans before I set the snare for David; and here are you sending him into the house! Find some excuse for stopping here, at least, and when David and Lucien come out, send them round this way; they will think they are quite alone, and I shall overhear their good-bye."

"You are a very devil," muttered Petit-Claud.

"Well, I'm blessed if a man wouldn't do anything for the thing you promised me."

Petit-Claud walked away from the hoarding, and paced up and down in the Place du Mûrier; he watched the windows of the room where the family sat together, and thought of his own prospects to keep up his courage. Cérizet's cleverness had given him the chance of striking the final blow. Petit-Claud was a double-dealer of the profoundly cautious stamp that is never caught by the bait of a present satisfaction, nor entangled by a personal attachment, after his first initiation into the strategy of self-seeking and the instability of the human heart. So, from the very first, he had put little trust in Cointet. He foresaw that his marriage negotiations might very easily be broken off, saw also that in that case he could not accuse Cointet of bad faith, and he had taken his measures accordingly. But since his success at the Hôtel de Bargeton, Petit-Claud's game was above board. A certain under-plot of his was useless now, and even dangerous to a man with his political ambitions. He had laid the foundations of his future importance in the following manner:—

Gannerac and a few of the wealthy men of business in L'Houmeau formed a sort of Liberal clique in constant communication (through commercial channels) with the leaders

of the Opposition. The Villèle ministry, accepted by the dying Louis XVIII., gave the signal for a change of tactics in the Opposition camp; for, since the death of Napoleon, the Liberals had ceased to resort to the dangerous expedient of conspiracy. They were busy organizing resistance by lawful means throughout the provinces, and aiming at securing control of the great bulk of electors by convincing the masses. Petit-Claud, a rabid Liberal, and a man of L'Houmeau, was the instigator, the secret counselor, and the very life of this movement in the lower town, which groaned under the tyranny of the aristocrats at the upper end. He was the first to see the danger of leaving the whole press of the department in the control of the Cointets; the Opposition must have its organ; it would not do to be behind other cities.

"If each one of us gives Gannerac a bill for five hundred francs, he would have some twenty thousand francs and more; we might buy up Séchard's printing-office, and we could do as we liked with the master-printer if we lent him the capital," Petit-Claud had said.

Others had taken up the idea, and in this way Petit-Claud strengthened his position with regard to David on the one side and the Cointets on the other. Casting about him for a tool for his party, he naturally thought that a rogue of Cérizet's calibre was the very man for the purpose.

"If you can find Séchard's hiding-place and put him in our hands, somebody will lend you twenty thousand francs to buy his business, and very likely there will be a newspaper to print. So, set about it," he had said.

Petit-Claud put more faith in Cérizet's activity than in all the Doublons in existence; and then it was that he promised Cointet that Séchard should be arrested. But now that the little lawyer cherished hopes of office, he saw that he must turn his back upon the Liberals; and, meanwhile, the amount for the printing-office had been subscribed in L'Houmeau. Petit-Claud decided to allow things to take their natural course.

"Pooh!" he thought, "Cérizet will get into trouble with his

paper, and give me an opportunity of displaying my talents."

He walked up to the door of the printing-office and spoke to Kolb, the sentinel. "Go up and warn David that he had better go now," he said, "and take every precaution. I am going home; it is one o'clock."

Marion came to take Kolb's place. Lucien and David came down together and went out, Kolb a hundred paces ahead of them, and Marion at the same distance behind. The two friends walked past the hoarding, Lucien talking eagerly the while.

"My plan is extremely simple, David; but how could I tell you about it while Eve was there? She would never understand. I am quite sure that at the bottom of Louise's heart there is a feeling that I can rouse, and I should like to arouse it if it is only to avenge myself upon that idiot the prefect. If our love affair only lasts for a week, I will contrive to send an application through her for a subvention of twenty thousand francs for you. I am going to see her again to-morrow in the little boudoir where our old affair of the heart began; Petit-Claud says that the room is the same as ever; I shall play my part in the comedy; and I will send word by Basine to-morrow morning to tell you whether the actor was hissed. You may be at liberty by then, who knows?—Now do you understand how it was that I wanted clothes from Paris? One cannot act the lover's part in rags."

At six o'clock that morning Cérizet went to Petit-Claud.

"Doublon can be ready to take his man to-morrow at noon, I will answer for it," he said; "I know one of Mlle. Clerget's girls, do you understand?" Cérizet unfolded his plan, and Petit-Claud hurried to find Cointet.

"If M. Francis du Hautoy will settle his property on Françoise, you shall sign a deed of partnership with Séchard in two days. I shall not be married for a week after the contract is signed, so we shall both be within the terms of our little agreement, tit for tat. To-night, however, we must keep a close watch over Lucien and Mme. la Comtesse du

Châtelet, for the whole business lies in that. . . . If Lucien hopes to succeed through the Countess' influence, I have David safe——"

"You will be Keeper of the Seals yet, it is my belief," said Cointet.

"And why not? No one objects to M. de Peyronnet," said Petit-Claud. He had not altogether sloughed his skin of Liberalism.

Mlle. de la Haye's ambiguous position brought most of the upper town to the signing of the marriage contract. The comparative poverty of the young couple and the absence of a *corbeille* quickened the interest that people love to exhibit; for it is with beneficence as with ovations, we prefer the deeds of charity which gratify self-love. The Marquise de Pimentel, the Comtesse du Châtelet, M. de Senonches, and one or two frequenters of the house had given Françoise a few wedding presents, which made great talk in the city. These pretty trifles, together with the trousseau which Zéphirine had been preparing for the past twelve months, the godfather's jewels, and the usual wedding gifts, consoled Françoise and roused the curiosity of some mothers of daughters.

Petit-Claud and Cointet had both remarked that their presence in the Angoulême Olympus was endured rather than courted. Cointet was Françoise's trustee and quasi-guardian; and if Petit-Claud was to sign the contract, Petit-Claud's presence was as necessary as the attendance of the man to be hanged at an execution; but though, once married, Mme. Petit-Claud might keep her right of entry to her godmother's house, Petit-Claud foresaw some difficulty on his own account, and resolved to be beforehand with these haughty personages.

He felt ashamed of his parents. He had sent his mother to stay at Mansle; now he begged her to say that she was out of health and to give her consent in writing. So humiliating was it to be without relations, protectors, or witnesses to his signature, that Petit-Claud thought himself in luck that he could bring a presentable friend at the Countess' request. He called to take up Lucien, and they drove to the Hôtel de Bargeton.

On that memorable evening the poet dressed to outshine every man present. Mme. de Senonches had spoken of him as the hero of the hour, and a first interview between two estranged lovers is the kind of scene that provincials particularly love. Lucien had come to be the lion of the evening; he was said to be so handsome, so much changed, so wonderful, that every well-born woman in Angoulême was curious to see him again. Following the fashion of the transition period between the eighteenth century small clothes and the vulgar costume of the present day, he wore tight-fitting black trousers. Men still showed their figures in those days, to the utter despair of lean, clumsily-made mortals; and Lucien was an Apollo. The open-work gray silk stockings, the neat shoes, and the black satin waistcoat were scrupulously drawn over his person, and seemed to cling to him. His forehead looked the whiter by contrast with the thick, bright curls that rose above it with studied grace. The proud eyes were radiant. The hands, small as a woman's, never showed to better advantage than when gloved. He had modeled himself upon de Marsay, the famous Parisian dandy, holding his hat and cane in one hand, and keeping the other free for the very occasional gestures which illustrated his talk.

Lucien had quite intended to emulate the famous false modesty of those who bend their heads to pass beneath the Porte Saint-Denis, and to slip unobserved into the room; but Petit-Claud, having but one friend, made him useful. He brought Lucien almost pompously through a crowded room to Mme. de Senonches. The poet heard a murmur as he passed; not so very long ago that hum of voices would have turned his head, to-day he was quite different; he did not doubt but that he himself was greater than the whole Olympus put together.

"Madame," he said, addressing Mme. de Senonches, "I have already congratulated my friend Petit-Claud (a man with the stuff in him of which Keepers of the Seals are made) on the honor of his approaching connection with you, slight as are the ties between godmother and goddaughter——" (this

with the air of a man uttering an epigram, by no means lost upon any woman in the room, for every woman was listening without appearing to do so). "And for myself," he continued, "I am delighted to have the opportunity of paying my homage to you."

He spoke easily and fluently, as some great lord might speak under the roof of his inferiors; and as he listened to Zéphirine's involved reply, he cast a glance over the room to consider the effect that he wished to make. The pause gave him time to discover Francis du Hautoy and the prefect; to bow gracefully to each with the proper shade of difference in his smile, and, finally, to approach Mme. du Châtelet as if he had just caught sight of her. That meeting was the real event of the evening. No one so much as thought of the marriage contract lying in the adjoining bedroom, whither Françoise and the notary led guest after guest to sign the document. Lucien made a step towards Louise de Nègrepelisse, and then spoke with that grace of manner now associated, for her, with memories of Paris.

"Do I owe to you, madame, the pleasure of an invitation to dine at the Prefecture the day after to-morrow?" he said.

"You owe it solely to your fame, monsieur," Louise answered drily, somewhat taken aback by the turn of a phrase by which Lucien deliberately tried to wound her pride.

"Ah! Mme. la Comtesse, I cannot bring you the guest if the man is in disgrace," said Lucien, with a perceptible significance in his coxcomb manner, and, without waiting for an answer, he turned and greeted the Bishop with stately grace.

"Your lordship's prophecy has been partially fulfilled," he said, and there was a winning charm in his tones; "I will endeavor to fulfil it to the letter. I consider myself very fortunate since this evening brings me an opportunity of paying my respects to you."

Lucien drew the Bishop into a conversation that lasted for ten minutes. The women looked on Lucien as a phenomenon. His unexpected insolence had struck Mme. du Châtelet dumb; she could not find an answer. Looking round the room, she

saw that every woman admired Lucien; she watched group after group repeating the phrases by which Lucien crushed her with seeming disdain, and her heart contracted with a spasm of mortification.

"Suppose that he should not come to the Prefecture after this, what talk there would be!" she thought. "Where did he learn this pride? Can Mlle. des Touches have taken a fancy for him? . . . He is so handsome. They say that she hurried to see him in Paris the day after that actress died. . . . Perhaps he has come to the rescue of his brother-in-law, and happened to be behind our calèche at Mansle by accident. Lucien looked at us very strangely that morning."

A crowd of thoughts crossed Louise's brain, and unluckily for her, she continued to ponder visibly as she watched Lucien. He was talking with the Bishop as if he were the king of the room; making no effort to find any one out, waiting till others came to him, looking round about him with varying expression, and as much at his ease as his model de Marsay. M. de Senonches appeared at no great distance, but Lucien still stood beside the prelate.

At the end of ten minutes Louise could contain herself no longer. She rose and went over to the Bishop and said:

"What is being said, my lord, that you smile so often?"

Lucien drew back discreetly, and left Mme. du Châtelet with his lordship.

"Ah! Mme. la Comtesse, what a clever young fellow he is! He was explaining to me that he owed all he is to you——"

"*I* am not ungrateful, madame," said Lucien, with a reproachful glance that charmed the Countess.

"Let us have an understanding," she said, beckoning him with her fan. "Come into the boudoir. My Lord Bishop, you shall judge between us."

"She has found a funny task for his lordship," said one of the Chandour camp, sufficiently audibly.

"Judge between us!" repeated Lucien, looking from the prelate to the lady; "then, is one of us in fault?"

Louise de Nègrepelisse sat down on the sofa in the familiar boudoir. She made the Bishop sit on one side and Lucien on the other, then she began to speak. But Lucien, to the joy and surprise of his old love, honored her with inattention; her words fell unheeded on his ears; he sat like Pasta in *Tancredi,* with the words *O patria!* upon her lips, the music of the great cavatina *Dell Rizzo* might have passed into his face. Indeed, Coralie's pupil had contrived to bring the tears to his eyes.

"Oh! Louise, how I loved you!" he murmured, careless of the Bishop's presence, heedless of the conversation, as soon as he knew that the Countess had seen the tears.

"Dry your eyes, or you will ruin me here a second time," she said in an aside that horrified the prelate.

"And once is enough," was Lucien's quick retort. "That speech from Mme. d'Espard's cousin would dry the eyes of a weeping Magdalene. Oh me! for a little moment old memories, and lost illusions, and my twentieth year came back to me, and you have——"

His lordship hastily retreated to the drawing-room at this; it seemed to him that his dignity was like to be compromised by this sentimental pair. Every one ostentatiously refrained from interrupting them, and a quarter of an hour went by; till at last Sixte du Châtelet, vexed by the laughter and talk, and excursions to the boudoir door, went in with a countenance distinctly overclouded, and found Louise and Lucien talking excitedly.

"Madame," said Sixte in his wife's ear, "you know Angoulême better than I do, and surely you should think of your position as Mme. la Préfète and of the Government?"

"My dear," said Louise, scanning her responsible editor with a haughtiness that made him quake, "I am talking with M. de Rubempré of matters which interest you. It is a question of rescuing an inventor about to fall a victim to the basest machinations; you will help us. As to those ladies yonder, and their opinion of me, you shall see how I will freeze the venom of their tongues."

She came out of the boudoir on Lucien's arm, and drew him across to sign the contract with a great lady's audacity.

"Write your name after mine," she said, handing him the pen. And Lucien submissively signed in the place indicated beneath her name.

"M. de Senonches, would you have recognized M. de Rubempré?" she continued, and the insolent sportsman was compelled to greet Lucien.

She returned to the drawing-room on Lucien's arm, and seated him on the awe-inspiring central sofa between herself and Zéphirine. There, enthroned like a queen, she began, at first in a low voice, a conversation in which epigram evidently was not wanting. Some of her old friends, and several women who paid court to her, came to join the group, and Lucien soon became the hero of the circle. The Countess drew him out on the subject of life in Paris; his satirical talk flowed with spontaneous and incredible spirit; he told anecdotes of celebrities, those conversational luxuries which the provincial devours with such avidity. His wit was as much admired as his good looks. And Mme. la Comtesse Sixte du Châtelet, preparing Lucien's triumph so patiently, sat like a player enraptured with the sound of his instrument; she gave him opportunities for a reply; she looked round the circle for applause so openly, that not a few of the women began to think that their return together was something more than a coincidence, and that Lucien and Louise, loving with all their hearts, had been separated by a double treason. Pique, very likely, had brought about this ill-starred match with Châtelet. And a reaction set in against the prefect.

Before the Countess rose to go at one o'clock in the morning, she turned to Lucien and said in a low voice, "Do me the pleasure of coming punctually to-morrow evening." Then, with the friendliest little nod, she went, saying a few words to Châtelet, who was looking for his hat.

"If Mme. du Châtelet has given me a correct idea of the state of affairs, count on me, my dear Lucien," said the prefect, preparing to hurry after his wife. She was going away

without him, after the Paris fashion. "Your brother-in-law may consider that his troubles are at an end," he added as he went.

"M. le Comte surely owes me so much," smiled Lucien.

Cointet and Petit-Claud heard these farewell speeches.

"Well, well, we are done for now," Cointet muttered in his confederate's ear. Petit-Claud, thunderstruck by Lucien's success, amazed by his brilliant wit and varying charm, was gazing at Françoise de la Haye; the girl's whole face was full of admiration for Lucien. "Be like your friend," she seemed to say to her betrothed. A gleam of joy flitted over Petit-Claud's countenance.

"We have still a whole day before the prefect's dinner; I will answer for everything."

An hour later, as Petit-Claud and Lucien walked home together, Lucien talked of his success. "Well, my dear fellow, I came, I saw, I conquered! Séchard will be very happy in a few hours' time."

"Just what I wanted to know," thought Petit-Claud. Aloud he said—"I thought you were simply a poet, Lucien, but you are a Lauzun too, that is to say—twice a poet," and they shook hands—for the last time, as it proved.

"Good news, dear Eve," said Lucien, waking his sister, "David will have no debts in less than a month!"

"How is that?"

"Well, my Louise is still hidden by Mme. du Châtelet's petticoat. She loves me more than ever; she will send a favorable report of our discovery to the Minister of the Interior through her husband. So we have only to endure our troubles for one month, while I avenge myself on the prefect and complete the happiness of his married life."

Eve listened, and thought that she must be dreaming.

"I saw the little gray drawing-room where I trembled like a child two years ago; it seemed as if scales fell from my eyes when I saw the furniture and the pictures and the faces again. How Paris changes one's ideas!"

"Is that a good thing?" asked Eve, at last beginning to understand.

"Come, come; you are still asleep. We will talk about it to-morrow after breakfast."

Cérizet's plot was exceedingly simple, a commonplace stratagem familiar to the provincial bailiff. Its success entirely depends upon circumstances, and in this case it was certain, so intimate was Cérizet's knowledge of the characters and hopes of those concerned. Cérizet had been a kind of Don Juan among young work-girls, ruling his victims by playing one off against another. Since he had been the Cointets' extra foreman, he had singled out one of Basine Clerget's assistants, a girl almost as handsome as Mme. Séchard. Henriette Signol's parents owned a small vineyard two leagues out of Angoulême, on the road to Saintes. The Signols, like everybody else in the country, could not afford to keep their only child at home; so they meant her to go out to service, in country phrase. The art of clear-starching is a part of every country housemaid's training; and so great was Mme. Prieur's reputation, that the Signols sent Henriette to her as apprentice, and paid for their daughter's board and lodging.

Mme. Prieur was one of the old-fashioned mistresses, who consider that they fill a parent's place towards their apprentices. They were part of the family; she took them with her to church, and looked scrupulously after them. Henriette Signol was a tall, fine-looking girl, with bold eyes, and long, thick, dark hair, and the pale, very fair complexion of girls in the South—white as a magnolia flower. For which reasons Henriette was one of the first on whom Cérizet cast his eyes; but Henriette came of "honest farmer folk," and only yielded at last to jealousy, to bad example, and the treacherous promise of subsequent marriage. By this time Cérizet was the Cointets' foreman. When he learned that the Signols owned a vineyard worth some ten or twelve thousand francs, and a tolerably comfortable cottage, he hastened to make it impossible for Henriette to marry any one else. Affairs had reached this point when Petit-Claud held out the prospect of a printing-office and twenty thousand francs of borrowed capital, which was to prove a yoke upon the borrower's neck.

Cérizet was dazzled, the offer turned his head; Henriette Signol was now only an obstacle in the way of his ambitions, and he neglected the poor girl. Henriette, in her despair, clung more closely to her seducer as he tried to shake her off. When Cérizet began to suspect that David was hiding in Basine's house, his views with regard to Henriette underwent another change, though he treated her as before. A kind of frenzy works in a girl's brain when she must marry her seducer to conceal her dishonor, and Cérizet was on the watch to turn this madness to his own account.

During the morning of the day when Lucien had set himself to reconquer his Louise, Cérizet told Basine's secret to Henriette, giving her to understand at the same time that their marriage and future prospects depended upon the discovery of David's hiding-place. Thus instructed, Henriette easily made certain of the fact that David was in Basine Clerget's inner room. It never occurred to the girl that she was doing wrong to act the spy, and Cérizet involved her in the guilt of betrayal by this first step.

Lucien was still sleeping while Cérizet, closeted with Petit-Claud, heard the history of the important trifles with which all Angoulême presently would ring.

The Cointets' foreman gave a satisfied nod as Petit-Claud came to an end. "Lucien surely has written you a line since he came back, has he not?" he asked.

"This is all that I have," answered the lawyer, and he held out a note on Mme. Séchard's writing-paper.

"Very well," said Cérizet, "let Doublon be in wait at the Palet Gate about ten minutes before sunset; tell him to post his gendarmes, and you shall have our man."

"Are you sure of *your* part of the business?" asked Petit-Claud, scanning Cérizet.

"I rely on chance," said the ex-street boy, "and she is a saucy huzzy; she does not like honest folk."

"You must succeed," the lawyer said drily.

"I shall succeed," said Cérizet. "You have pushed me into this dirty business; you may as well let me have a few bank-

notes to wipe off the stains."—Then detecting a look that he did not like in the attorney's face, he continued, with a deadly glance, "If you have cheated me, sir, if you don't buy the printing-office for me within a week—you will leave a young widow;" he lowered his voice.

"If we have David on the jail register at six o'clock, come round to M. Gannerac's at nine, and we will settle your business," said Petit-Claud peremptorily.

"Agreed. Your will shall be done, governor," said Cérizet.

Cérizet understood the art of washing paper, a dangerous art for the Treasury. He washed out Lucien's four lines and replaced them, imitating the handwriting with a dexterity which augured ill for his own future:—

"My dear David,—Your business is settled; you need not fear to go to the prefect. You can go out at sunset. I will come to meet you and tell you what to do at the prefecture.—Your brother, Lucien."

At noon Lucien wrote to David, telling him of his evening's success. The prefect would be sure to lend his influence, he said; he was full of enthusiasm over the invention, and was drawing up a report that very day to send to the Government. Marion carried the letter to Basine, taking some of Lucien's linen to the laundry as a pretext for the errand.

Petit-Claud had told Cérizet that a letter would in all probability be sent. Cérizet called for Mlle. Signol, and the two walked by the Charente. Henriette's integrity must have held out for a long while, for the walk lasted for two hours. A whole future of happiness and ease and the interests of a child were at stake, and Cérizet asked a mere trifle of her. He was very careful besides to say nothing of the consequences of that trifle. She was only to carry a letter and a message, that was all; but it was the greatness of the reward for the trifling service that frightened Henriette. Nevertheless, Cérizet gained her consent at last; she would help him in his stratagem.

At five o'clock Henriette must go out and come in again, telling Basine Clerget that Mme. Séchard wanted to speak to her at once. Fifteen minutes after Basine's departure she must go upstairs, knock at the door of the inner room, and give David the forged note. That was all. Cérizet looked to chance to manage the rest.

For the first time in twelve months, Eve felt the iron grasp of necessity relax a little. She began at last to hope. She, too, would enjoy her brother's visit; she would show herself abroad on the arm of a man fêted in his native town, adored by the women, beloved by the proud Comtesse du Châtelet. She dressed herself prettily, and proposed to walk out after dinner with her brother to Beaulieu. In September all Angoulême comes out at that hour to breathe the fresh air.

"Oh! that is the beautiful Mme. Séchard," voices said here and there.

"I should never have believed it of her," said a woman.

"The husband is in hiding, and the wife walks abroad," said Mme. Postel for young Mme. Séchard's benefit.

"Oh, let us go home," said poor Eve; "I have made a mistake."

A few minutes before sunset, the sound of a crowd rose from the steps that lead down to L'Houmeau. Apparently some crime had been committed, for persons coming from L'Houmeau were talking among themselves. Curiosity drew Lucien and Eve towards the steps.

"A thief has just been arrested no doubt, the man looks as pale as death," one of these passers-by said to the brother and sister. The crowd grew larger.

Lucien and Eve watched a group of some thirty children, old women and men, returning from work, clustering about the gendarmes, whose gold-laced caps gleamed above the heads of the rest. About a hundred persons followed the procession, the crowd gathering like a storm cloud.

"Oh! it is my husband!" Eve cried out.

"*David!*" exclaimed Lucien.

"It is his wife," said voices, and the crowd made way.

"What made you come out?" asked Lucien.

"Your letter," said David, haggard and white.

"I knew it!" said Eve, and she fainted away. Lucien raised his sister, and with the help of two strangers he carried her home; Marion laid her in bed, and Kolb rushed off for a doctor. Eve was still insensible when the doctor arrived; and Lucien was obliged to confess to his mother that he was the cause of David's arrest; for he, of course, knew nothing of the forged letter and Cérizet's stratagem. Then he went up to his room and locked himself in, struck dumb by the malediction in his mother's eyes.

In the dead of night he wrote one more letter amid constant interruptions; the reader can divine the agony of the writer's mind from those phrases, jerked out, as it were, one by one:—

"My beloved Sister,—We have seen each other for the last time. My resolution is final, and for this reason. In many families there is one unlucky member, a kind of disease in their midst. I am that unlucky one in our family. The observation is not mine; it was made at a friendly supper one evening at the *Rocher de Cancale* by a diplomate who has seen a great deal of the world. While we laughed and joked, he explained the reason why some young lady or other remained unmarried, to the astonishment of the world—it was 'a touch of her father,' he said, and with that he unfolded his theory of inherited weaknesses. He told us how such and such a family would have flourished but for the mother; how it was that a son had ruined his father, or a father had stripped his children of prospects and respectability. It was said laughingly, but we thought of so many cases in point in ten minutes that I was struck with the theory. The amount of truth in it furnished all sorts of wild paradoxes, which journalists maintain cleverly enough for their own amusement when there is nobody else at hand to mystify. I bring bad luck to our family. My heart is full of love for you, yet I behave like an enemy. The blow dealt unintentionally is

the cruelest blow of all. While I was leading a bohemian life in Paris, a life made up of pleasure and misery; taking good fellowship for friendship, forsaking my true friends for those who wished to exploit me, and succeeded; forgetful of you, or remembering you only to cause you trouble,—all that while you were walking in the humble path of hard work, making your way slowly but surely to the fortune which I tried so madly to snatch. While you grew better, I grew worse; a fatal element entered into my life through my own choice. Yes, unbounded ambition makes an obscure existence simply impossible for me. I have tastes and remembrances of past pleasures that poison the enjoyments within my reach; once I should have been satisfied with them, now it is too late. Oh, dear Eve, no one can think more hardly of me than I do myself; my condemnation is absolute and pitiless. The struggle in Paris demands steady effort; my will power is spasmodic, my brain works intermittently. The future is so appalling that I do not care to face it, and the present is intolerable.

"I wanted to see you again. I should have done better to stay in exile all my days. But exile without means of subsistence would be madness; I will not add another folly to the rest. Death is better than a maimed life; I cannot think of myself in any position in which my overweening vanity would not lead me into folly.

"Some human beings are like the figure O, another must be put before it, and they acquire ten times their value. I am nothing unless a strong inexorable will is wedded to mine. Mme. de Bargeton was in truth my wife; when I refused to leave Coralie for her I spoiled my life. You and David might have been excellent pilots for me, but you are not strong enough to tame my weakness, which in some sort eludes control. I like an easy life, a life without cares; to clear an obstacle out of my way I can descend to baseness that sticks at nothing. I was born a prince. I have more than the requisite intellectual dexterity for success, but only by moments; and the prizes of a career so crowded by ambitious competitors are

to those who expend no more than the necessary strength, and retain a sufficient reserve power when they reach the goal.

"I shall do harm again with the best intentions in the world. Some are men like oaks, I am a delicate shrub it may be, and I, forsooth, must needs aspire to be a forest cedar.

"There you have my bankrupt's schedule. The disproportion between my powers and my desires, my want of balance, in short, will bring all my efforts to nothing. There are many such characters among men of letters, many men whose intellectual powers and character are always at variance, who will one thing and wish another. What would become of me? I can see it all beforehand, as I think of this and that great light that once shone on Paris, now utterly forgotten. On the threshold of old age I shall be a man older than my age, needy and without a name. My whole soul rises up against the thought of such a close; I will not be a social rag. Ah, dear sister, loved and worshiped at least as much for your severity at the last as for your tenderness at the first—if we have paid so dear for my joy at seeing you all once more, you and David may perhaps some day think that you could grudge no price however high for a little last happiness for an unhappy creature who loved you. Do not try to find me, Eve; do not seek to know what becomes of me. My intellect for once shall be backed by my will. Renunciation, my angel, is daily death of self; my renunciation will only last for one day; I will take advantage now of that day. . . ."

"Two o'clock.

"Yes, I have quite made up my mind. Farewell for ever, dear Eve. There is something sweet in the thought that I shall live only in your hearts henceforth, and I wish no other burying place. Once more, farewell. . . . That is the last word from your brother LUCIEN."

Lucien read the letter over, crept noiselessly down stairs, and left it in the child's cradle; amid falling tears he set a last kiss on the forehead of his sleeping sister; then he went out.

He put out his candle in the gray dusk, took a last look at the old house, stole softly along the passage, and opened the street door; but in spite of his caution, he awakened Kolb, who slept on a mattress on the workshop floor.

"Who goes there?" cried Kolb.

"It is I, Lucien; I am going away, Kolb."

"You vould haf done better gif you hat nefer kom," Kolb muttered audibly.

"I should have done better still if I had never come into the world," Lucien answered. "Good-bye, Kolb; I don't bear you any grudge for thinking as I think myself. Tell David that I was sorry I could not bid him good-bye, and say that this was my last thought."

By the time the Alsacien was up and dressed, Lucien had shut the house door, and was on his way towards the Charente by the Promenade de Beaulieu. He might have been going to a festival, for he had put on his new clothes from Paris and his dandy's trinkets for a drowning shroud. Something in Lucien's tone had struck Kolb. At first the man thought of going to ask his mistress whether she knew that her brother had left the house; but as the deepest silence prevailed, he concluded that the departure had been arranged beforehand, and lay down again and slept.

Little, considering the gravity of the question, has been written on the subject of suicide; it has not been studied. Perhaps it is a disease that cannot be observed. Suicide is one effect of a sentiment which we will call self-esteem, if you will, to prevent confusion by using the word "honor." When a man despises himself, and sees that others despise him, when real life fails to fulfil his hopes, then comes the moment when he takes his life, and thereby does homage to society—shorn of his virtues or his splendor, he does not care to face his fellows. Among atheists—Christians being without the question of suicide—among atheists, whatever may be said to the contrary, none but a base coward can take up a dishonored life.

There are three kinds of suicide—the first is only the last and acute stage of a long illness, and this kind belongs dis-

tinctly to pathology; the second is the suicide of despair; and the third the suicide based on logical argument. Despair and deductive reasoning had brought Lucien to this pass, but both varieties are curable; it is only the pathological suicide that is inevitable. Not infrequently you find all three causes combined, as in the case of Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

Lucien having made up his mind fell to considering methods. The poet would fain die as became a poet. At first he thought of throwing himself into the Charente and making an end then and there; but as he came down the steps from Beaulieu for the last time, he heard the whole town talking of his suicide; he saw the horrid sight of a drowned dead body, and thought of the recognition and the inquest; and, like some other suicides, felt that vanity reached beyond death.

He remembered the day spent at Courtois' mill, and his thoughts returned to the round pool among the willows that he saw as he came along by the little river, such a pool as you often find on small streams, with a still, smooth surface that conceals great depths beneath. The water is neither green nor blue nor white nor tawny; it is like a polished steel mirror. No sword-grass grows about the margin; there are no blue water forget-me-nots, nor broad lily leaves; the grass at the brim is short and thick, and the weeping willows that droop over the edge grow picturesquely enough. It is easy to imagine a sheer precipice beneath filled with water to the brim. Any man who should have the courage to fill his pockets with pebbles would not fail to find death, and never be seen thereafter.

At the time while he admired the lovely miniature of a landscape, the poet had thought to himself, "'Tis a spot to make your mouth water for a *noyade*."

He thought of it now as he went down into L'Houmeau; and when he took his way towards Marsac, with the last sombre thoughts gnawing at his heart, it was with the firm resolve to hide his death. There should be no inquest held over him; he would not be laid in earth; no one should see him in the hideous condition of the corpse that floats on the surface of

the water. Before long he reached one of the slopes, common enough on all French highroads, and commonest of all between Angoulême and Poitiers. He saw the coach from Bordeaux to Paris coming up at full speed behind him, and knew that the passengers would probably alight to walk up the hill. He did not care to be seen just then. Turning off sharply into a beaten track, he began to pick the flowers in a vineyard hard by.

When Lucien came back to the road with a great bunch of the yellow stone-crop which grows everywhere upon the stony soil of the vineyards, he came out upon a traveler dressed in black from head to foot. The stranger wore powder, there were silver buckles on his shoes of Orleans leather, and his brown face was scarred and seamed as if he had fallen into the fire in infancy. The traveler, so obviously clerical in his dress, was walking slowly and smoking a cigar. He turned as Lucien jumped down from the vineyard into the road. The deep melancholy on the handsome young face, the poet's symbolical flowers, and his elegant dress seemed to strike the stranger. He looked at Lucien with something of the expression of a hunter that has found his quarry at last after long and fruitless search. He allowed Lucien to come alongside, in nautical phrase; then he slackened his pace, and appeared to look along the road up the hill; Lucien, following the direction of his eyes, saw a light traveling carriage with two horses, and a post-boy standing beside it.

"You have allowed the coach to pass you, monsieur; you will lose your place unless you care to take a seat in my calèche and overtake the mail, for it is rather quicker traveling post than by the public conveyance." The traveler spoke with extreme politeness and a very marked Spanish accent.

Without waiting for an answer, he drew a cigar-case from his pocket, opened it, and held it out to Lucien.

"I am not on a journey," said Lucien, "and I am too near the end of my stage to indulge in the pleasure of smoking——"

"You are very severe with yourself," returned the Spaniard.

"Though I am a canon of the cathedral of Toledo, I occasionally smoke a cigarette. God gave us tobacco to allay our passions and our pains. You seem to be downcast, or at any rate, you carry the symbolical flower of sorrow in your hand, like the rueful god Hymen. Come! all your troubles will vanish away with the smoke," and again the ecclesiastic held out his little straw case; there was something fascinating in his manner, and kindliness towards Lucien lighted up his eyes.

"Forgive me, father," Lucien answered stiffly; "there is no cigar that can scatter my troubles." Tears came to his eyes at the words.

"It must surely be Divine Providence that prompted me to take a little exercise to shake off a traveler's morning drowsiness," said the churchman. "A divine prompting to fulfil my mission here on earth by consoling you.—What great trouble can you have at your age?"

"Your consolations, father, can do nothing for me. You are a Spaniard, I am a Frenchman; you believe in the commandments of the Church, I am an atheist."

"*Santa Virgen del Pilar!* you are an atheist!" cried the other, laying a hand on Lucien's arm with maternal solicitude. "Ah! here is one of the curious things I promised myself to see in Paris. We, in Spain, do not believe in atheists. There is no country but France where one can have such opinions at nineteen years."

"Oh! I am an atheist in the fullest sense of the word. I have no belief in God, in society, in happiness. Take a good look at me, father; for in a few hours' time life will be over for me. My last sun has risen," said Lucien, with a sort of rhetorical effect he waved his hand towards the sky.

"How so; what have you done that you must die? Who has condemned you to die?"

"A tribunal from which there is no appeal—I myself."

"You, child!" cried the priest. "Have you killed a man? Is the scaffold waiting for you? Let us reason together a little. If you are resolved, as you say, to return to nothingness, everything on earth is indifferent to you, is it not?"

Lucien bowed assent.

"Very well, then; can you not tell me about your troubles? Some little affair of the heart has taken a bad turn, no doubt?"

Lucien shrugged his shoulders very significantly.

"Are you resolved to kill yourself to escape dishonor, or do you despair of life? Very good. You can kill yourself at Poitiers quite as easily as at Angoulême, and at Tours it will be no harder than at Poitiers. The quicksands of the Loire never give up their prey——"

"No, father," said Lucien; "I have settled it all. Not three weeks ago I chanced upon the most charming raft that can ferry a man sick and tired of this life into the other world——"

"The other world? You are not an atheist."

"Oh! by another world I mean my next transformation, animal or plant."

"Have you some incurable disease?"

"Yes, father."

"Ah! now we come to the point. What is it?"

"Poverty."

The priest looked at Lucien. "The diamond does not know its own value," he said, and there was an inexpressible charm, and a touch of something like irony in his smile.

"None but a priest could flatter a poor man about to die," exclaimed Lucien.

"You are not going to die," the Spaniard returned authoritatively.

"I have heard many times of men that were robbed on the highroad, but I have never yet heard of one that found a fortune there," said Lucien.

"You will hear of one now," said the priest, glancing towards the carriage to measure the time still left for their walk together. "Listen to me," he continued, with his cigar between his teeth; "if you are poor, that is no reason why you should die. I need a secretary, for mine has just died at Barcelona. I am in the same position as the famous Baron

Goërtz, minister of Charles XII. He was traveling toward Sweden (just as I am going to Paris), and in some little town or other he chanced upon the son of a goldsmith, a young man of remarkable good looks, though they could scarcely equal yours. . . . Baron Goërtz discerned intelligence in the young man (just as I see poetry on your brow); he took him into his traveling carriage, as I shall take you very shortly; and of a boy condemned to spend his days in burnishing spoons and forks and making trinkets in some little town like Angoulême, he made a favorite, as you shall be mine.

"Arrived at Stockholm, he installed his secretary and overwhelmed him with work. The young man spent his nights in writing, and, like all great workers, he contracted a bad habit, a trick—he took to chewing paper. The late M. de Malesherbes used to rap people over the knuckles; and he did this once, by the by, to somebody or other whose suit depended upon him. The handsome young secretary began by chewing blank paper, found it insipid for a while, and acquired a taste for manuscript as having more flavor. People did not smoke as yet in those days. At last, from flavor to flavor, he began to chew parchment and swallow it. Now, at that time a treaty was being negotiated between Russia and Sweden. The States-General insisted that Charles XII. should make peace (much as they tried in France to make Napoleon treat for peace in 1814), and the basis of these negotiations was the treaty between the two powers with regard to Finland. Goërtz gave the original into his secretary's keeping; but when the time came for laying the draft before the States-General, a trifling difficulty arose, the treaty was not to be found. The States-General believed that the Minister, pandering to the King's wishes, had taken it into his head to get rid of the document. Baron Goërtz was, in fact, accused of this, and the secretary owned that he had eaten the treaty. He was tried and convicted and condemned to death.—But you have not come to that yet, so take a cigar and smoke till we reach the calèche."

Lucien took a cigar and lit it, Spanish fashion, at the

priest's cigar. "He is right," he thought; "I can take my life at any time."

"It often happens that a young man's fortunes take a turn when despair is darkest," the Spaniard continued. "That is what I wished to tell you, but I preferred to prove it by a case in point. Here was the handsome young secretary lying under sentence of death, and his case the more desperate because, as he had been condemned by the States-General, the King could not pardon him, but he connived at his escape. The secretary stole away in a fishing-boat with a few crowns in his pocket, and reached the court of Courland with a letter of introduction from Goërtz, explaining his secretary's adventures and his craze for paper. The Duke of Courland was a spendthrift; he had a steward and a pretty wife—three several causes of ruin. He placed the charming young stranger with his steward.

"If you can imagine that the sometime secretary had been cured of his depraved taste by a sentence of death, you do not know the grip that a man's failings have upon him; let a man discover some satisfaction for himself, and the headsman will not keep him from it.—How is it that vice has this power? Is it inherent strength in the vice, or inherent weakness in human nature? Are there certain tastes that should be regarded as verging on insanity? For myself, I cannot help laughing at the moralists who try to expel such diseases by fine phrases.—Well, it so fell out that the steward refused a demand for money; and the Duke taking fright at this, called for an audit. Sheer imbecility! Nothing easier than to make out a balance-sheet; the difficulty never lies there. The steward gave his secretary all the necessary documents for compiling a schedule of the civil list of Courland. He had nearly finished it when, in the dead of night, the unhappy paper-eater discovered that he was chewing up one of the Duke's discharges for a considerable sum. He had eaten half the signature! Horror seized upon him; he fled to the Duchess, flung himself at her feet, told her of his craze, and implored the aid of his sovereign lady, implored her in the mid-

dle of the night. The handsome young face made such an impression on the Duchess that she married him as soon as she was left a widow. And so in mid-eighteenth century, in a land where the king-at-arms is king, the goldsmith's son became a prince, and something more. On the death of Catherine I. he was regent; he ruled the Empress Anne, and tried to be the Richelieu of Russia. Very well, young man; now know this—if you are handsomer than Biron, I, simple canon that I am, am worth more than a Baron Goërtz. So get in; we will find a duchy of Courland for you in Paris, or failing the duchy, we shall certainly find the duchess."

The Spanish priest laid a hand on Lucien's arm, and literally forced him into the traveling carriage. The postilion shut the door.

"Now speak; I am listening," said the canon of Toledo, to Lucien's bewilderment. "I am an old priest; you can tell me everything, there is nothing to fear. So far we have only run through our patrimony or squandered mamma's money. We have made a flitting from our creditors, and we are honor personified down to the tips of our elegant little boots. . . . Come, confess boldly; it will be just as if you were talking to yourself."

Lucien felt like that hero of an Eastern tale, the fisher who tried to drown himself in mid-ocean, and sank down to find himself a king of countries under the sea. The Spanish priest seemed so really affectionate, that the poet hesitated no longer; between Angoulême and Ruffec he told the story of his whole life, omitting none of his misdeeds, and ended with the final catastrophe which he had brought about. The tale only gained in poetic charm because this was the third time he had told it in the past fortnight. Just as he made an end they passed the house of the Rastignac family.

"Young Rastignac left that place for Paris," said Lucien; "he is certainly not my equal, but he has had better luck."

The Spaniard started at the name. "Oh!" he said.

"Yes. That shy little place belongs to his father. As I was telling you just now, he was the lover of Mme. de Nucin-

gen, the famous banker's wife. I drifted into poetry; he was cleverer, he took the practical side."

The priest stopped the calèche; and was so far curious as to walk down the little avenue that led to the house, showing more interest in the place than Lucien expected from a Spanish ecclesiastic.

"Then, do you know the Rastignacs?" asked Lucien.

"I know every one in Paris," said the Spaniard, taking his place again in the carriage. "And so for want of ten or twelve thousand francs, you were about to take your life; you are a child, you know neither men nor things. A man's future is worth the value that he chooses to set upon it, and you value yours at twelve thousand francs! Well, I will give more than that for you any time. As for your brother-in-law's imprisonment, it is the merest trifle. If this dear M. Séchard has made a discovery, he will be a rich man some day, and a rich man has never been imprisoned for debt. You do not seem to me to be strong in history. History is of two kinds—there is the official history taught in schools, a lying compilation *ad usum delphini;* and there is secret history which deals with the real causes of events—a scandalous chronicle. Let me tell you briefly a little story which you have not heard. There was, once upon a time, a man, young and ambitious, and a priest to boot. He wanted to enter upon a political career, so he fawned on the Queen's favorite; the favorite took an interest in him, gave him the rank of minister, and a seat at the council board. One evening somebody wrote to the young aspirant, thinking to do him a service (never do a service, by the by, unless you are asked), and told him that his benefactor's life was in danger. The King's wrath was kindled against his rival; to-morrow, if the favorite went to the palace, he would certainly be stabbed; so said the letter. Well, now, young man, what would you have done?"

"I should have gone at once to warn my benefactor," Lucien exclaimed quickly.

"You are indeed the child which your story reveals!" said the priest. "Our man said to himself, 'If the King is re-

solved to go to such lengths, it is all over with my benefactor, I must receive this letter too late;' so he slept on till the favorite was stabbed——"

"He was a monster!" said Lucien, suspecting that the priest meant to sound him.

"So are all great men; this one was the Cardinal de Richelieu, and his benefactor was the Maréchal d'Ancre. You really do not know your history of France, you see. Was I not right when I told you that history as taught in schools is simply a collection of facts and dates, more than doubtful in the first place, and with no bearing whatever on the gist of the matter. You are told that such a person as Jeanne Darc once existed; where is the use of that? Have you never drawn your own conclusions from that fact? never seen that if France had accepted the Angevin dynasty of the Plantagenets, the two peoples thus reunited would be ruling the world to-day, and the islands that now brew political storms for the continent would be French provinces? . . . Why, have you so much as studied the means by which simple merchants like the Medicis became Grand-Dukes of Tuscany?"

"A poet in France is not bound to be 'as learned as a Benedictine,'" said Lucien.

"Well, they became Grand-Dukes as Richelieu became a minister. If you had looked into history for the causes of events instead of getting the headings by heart, you would have found precepts for your guidance in this life. These real facts taken at random from among so many supply you with the axiom—'Look upon men, and on women most of all, as your instruments; but never let them see this.' If some one higher in place can be useful to you, worship him as a god; and never leave him until he has paid the price of your servility to the last farthing. In your intercourse with men, in short, be grasping and mean as a Jew; all that the Jew does for money, you must do for power. And besides all this, when a man has fallen from power, care no more for him than if he had ceased to exist. And do you ask why you must do these things? You mean to rule the world, do you

not? You must begin by obeying and studying it. Scholars study books; politicians study men, and their interests and the springs of action. Society and mankind in masses are fatalists; they bow down and worship the accomplished fact. Do you know why I am giving you this little history lesson? It seems to me that your ambition is boundless——"

"Yes, father."

"I saw that myself," said the priest. "But at this moment you are thinking, 'Here is this Spanish canon inventing anecdotes and straining history to prove to me that I have too much virtue——' "

Lucien began to smile; his thoughts had been read so clearly.

"Very well, let us take facts that every schoolboy knows. One day France is almost entirely overrun by the English; the King has only a single province left. Two figures arise from among the people—a poor herd girl, that very Jeanne Darc of whom we were speaking, and a burgher named Jacques Cœur. The girl brings the power of virginity, the strength of her arm; the burgher gives his gold, and the kingdom is saved. The maid is taken prisoner, and the King, who could have ransomed her, leaves her to be burned alive. The King allows his courtier to accuse the great burgher of capital crime, and they rob him and divide all his wealth among themselves. The spoils of an innocent man, hunted down, brought to bay, and driven into exile by the Law, went to enrich five noble houses; and the father of the Archbishop of Bourges left the kingdom for ever without one sou of all his possessions in France, and no resource but moneys remitted to Arabs and Saracens in Egypt. It is open to you to say that these examples are out of date, that three centuries of public education have since elapsed, and that the outlines of those ages are more or less dim figures. Well, young man, do you believe in the last demi-god of France, in Napoleon? One of his generals was in disgrace all through his career; Napoleon made him a marshal grudgingly, and never sent him on service if he could help it. That marshal

was Kellermann. Do you know the reason of the grudge? . . . Kellermann saved France and the First Consul at Marengo by a brilliant charge; the ranks applauded under fire and in the thick of the carnage. That heroic charge was not even mentioned in the bulletin. Napoleon's coolness toward Kellermann, Fouché's fall, and Talleyrand's disgrace were all attributable to the same cause; it is the ingratitude of a Charles VII., or a Richelieu, or——"

"But, father," said Lucien, "suppose that you should save my life and make my fortune, you are making the ties of gratitude somewhat slight."

"Little rogue," said the Abbé, smiling as he pinched Lucien's ear with an almost royal familiarity. "If you are ungrateful to me, it will be because you are a strong man, and I shall bend before you. But you are not that just yet; as a simple 'prentice you have tried to be master too soon, the common fault of Frenchmen of your generation. Napoleon's example has spoiled them all. You send in your resignation because you have not the pair of epaulettes that you fancied. But have you attempted to bring the full force of your will and every action of your life to bear upon your one idea?"

"Alas! no."

"You have been inconsistent, as the English say," smiled the canon.

"What I have been matters nothing now," said Lucien, "if I can be nothing in the future."

"If at the back of all your good qualities there is power *semper virens*," continued the priest, not averse to show that he had a little Latin, "nothing in this world can resist you. I have taken enough of a liking for you already——"

Lucien smiled incredulously.

"Yes," said the priest, in answer to the smile, "you interest me as much as if you had been my son; and I am strong enough to afford to talk to you as openly as you have just done to me. Do you know what it is that I like about you?—This: you have made a sort of *tabula rasa* within yourself, and are ready to hear a sermon on morality that you will hear

nowhere else; for mankind in the mass are even more consummate hypocrites than any one individual can be when his interests demand a piece of acting. Most of us spend a good part of our lives in clearing our minds of the notions that sprang up unchecked during our nonage. This is called 'getting our experience.'"

Lucien, listening, thought within himself, "Here is some old intriguer delighted with a chance of amusing himself on a journey. He is pleased with the idea of bringing about a change of opinion in a poor wretch on the brink of suicide; and when he is tired of his amusement, he will drop me. Still he understands paradox, and seems to be quite a match for Blondet or Lousteau."

But in spite of these sage reflections, the diplomate's poison had sunk deeply into Lucien's soul; the ground was ready to receive it, and the havoc wrought was the greater because such famous examples were cited. Lucien fell under the charm of his companion's cynical talk, and clung the more willingly to life because he felt that this arm which drew him up from the depths was a strong one.

In this respect the ecclesiastic had evidently won the day; and, indeed, from time to time a malicious smile bore his cynical anecdotes company.

"If your system of morality at all resembles your manner of regarding history," said Lucien, "I should dearly like to know the motive of your present act of charity, for such it seems to be."

"There, young man, I have come to the last head of my sermon; you will permit me to reserve it, for in that case we shall not part company to-day," said the canon, with the tact of the priest who sees that his guile has succeeded.

"Very well, talk morality," said Lucien. To himself he said, "I will draw him out."

"Morality begins with the law," said the priest. "If it were simply a question of religion, laws would be superfluous; religious peoples have few laws. The laws of statecraft are above civil law. Well, do you care to know the inscription

which a politician can read, written at large over your nineteenth century? In 1793 the French invented the idea of the sovereignty of the people—and the sovereignty of the people came to an end under an absolute ruler in the Emperor. So much for your history as a nation. Now for your private manners. Mme. Tallien and Mme. Beauharnais both acted alike. Napoleon married the one, and made her your Empress; the other he would never receive at court, princess though she was. The sans-culotte of 1793 takes the Iron Crown in 1804. The fanatical lovers of Equality or Death conspire fourteen years afterwards with a Legitimist aristocracy to bring back Louis XVIII. And that same aristocracy, lording it to-day in the Faubourg Saint-Germain, has done worse—has been merchant, usurer, pastry-cook, farmer, and shepherd. So in France systems political and moral have started from one point and reached another diametrically opposed; and men have expressed one kind of opinion and acted on another. There has been no consistency in national policy, nor in the conduct of individuals. You cannot be said to have any morality left. Success is the supreme justification of all actions whatsoever. The fact in itself is nothing; the impression that it makes upon others is everything. Hence, please observe a second precept: Present a fair exterior to the world, keep the seamy side of life to yourself, and turn a resplendent countenance upon others. Discretion, the motto of every ambitious man, is the watchword of our Order; take it for your own. Great men are guilty of almost as many base deeds as poor outcasts; but they are careful to do these things in shadow and to parade their virtues in the light, or they would not be great men. Your insignificant man leaves his virtues in the shade; he publicly displays his pitiable side, and is despised accordingly. You, for instance, have hidden your titles to greatness and made a display of your worst failings. You openly took an actress for your mistress, lived with her and upon her; you were by no means to blame for this; everybody admitted that both of you were perfectly free to do as you liked;

but you ran full tilt against the ideas of the world, and the world has not shown you the consideration that is shown to those who obey the rules of the game. If you had left Coralie to this M. Camusot, if you had hidden your relations with her, you might have married Mme. de Bargeton; you would now be prefect of Angoulême and Marquis de Rubempré.

"Change your tactics, bring your good looks, your charm, your wit, your poetry to the front. If you indulge in small discreditable courses, let it be within four walls, and you will never again be guilty of a blot on the decorations of this great theatrical scene called society. Napoleon called this 'washing dirty linen at home.' The corollary follows naturally on this second precept—Form is everything. Be careful to grasp the meaning of that word 'form.' There are people who, for want of knowing better, will help themselves to money under pressure of want, and take it by force. These people are called criminals; and, perforce, they square accounts with Justice. A poor man of genius discovers some secret, some invention as good as a treasure; you lend him three thousand francs (for that, practically, the Cointets have done; they hold your bills, and they are about to rob your brother-in-law); you torment him until he reveals or partly reveals his secret; you settle your accounts with your own conscience, and your conscience does not drag you into the assize court.

"The enemies of social order, beholding this contrast, take occasion to yap at justice, and wax wroth in the name of the people, because, forsooth, burglars and fowl-stealers are sent to the hulks, while a man who brings whole families to ruin by a fraudulent bankruptcy is let off with a few months' imprisonment. But these hypocrites know quite well that the judge who passes sentence on the thief is maintaining the barrier set between the poor and the rich, and that if that barrier were overturned, social chaos would ensue; while, in the case of the bankrupt, the man who steals an inheritance cleverly, and the banker who slaughters a business for his own benefit, money merely changes hands, that is all.

"Society, my son, is bound to draw those distinctions which

I have pointed out for your benefit. The one great point is this—you must be a match for society. Napoleon, Richelieu, and the Medicis were a match for their generations. And as for you, you value yourself at twelve thousand francs! You of this generation in France worship the golden calf; what else is the religion of your Charter that will not recognize a man politically unless he owns property? What is this but the command, 'Strive to be rich?' Some day, when you shall have made a fortune without breaking the law, you will be rich; you will be the Marquis de Rubempré, and you can indulge in the luxury of honor. You will be so extremely sensitive on the point of honor that no one will dare to accuse you of past shortcomings if in the process of making your way you should happen to smirch it now and again, which I myself should never advise," he added, patting Lucien's hand.

"So what must you put in that comely head of yours? Simply this and nothing more—propose to yourself a brilliant and conspicuous goal, and go towards it secretly; let no one see your methods or your progress. You have behaved like a child; be a man, be a hunter, lie in wait for your quarry in the world of Paris, wait for your chance and your game; you need not be particular nor mindful of your dignity, as it is called; we are all of us slaves to something, to some failing of our own or to necessity; but keep that law of laws—secrecy."

"Father, you frighten me," said Lucien; "this seems to me to be a highwayman's theory."

"And you are right," said the canon, "but it is no invention of mine. All *parvenus* reason in this way—the house of Austria and the house of France alike. You have nothing, you say? The Medicis, Richelieu, and Napoleon started from precisely your standpoint; but *they,* my child, considered that their prospects were worth ingratitude, treachery, and the most glaring inconsistencies. You must dare all things to gain all things. Let us discuss it. Suppose that you sit down to a game of *bouillotte,* do you begin to argue over the rules of the game? There they are, you accept them."

"Come, now," thought Lucien, "he can play *bouillotte.*"

"And what do you do?" continued the priest; "do you practise openness, that fairest of virtues? Not merely do you hide your tactics, but you do your best to make others believe that you are on the brink of ruin as soon as you are sure of winning the game. In short, you dissemble, do you not? You lie to win four or five louis d'or. What would you think of a player so generous as to proclaim that he held a hand full of trumps? Very well; the ambitious man who carries virtue's precepts into the arena when his antagonists have left them behind is behaving like a child. Old men of the world might say to him, as card-players would say to the man who declines to take advantage of his trumps, 'Monsieur, you ought not to play at *bouillotte.*'

"Did you make the rules of the game of ambition? Why did I tell you to be a match for society?—Because, in these days, society by degrees has usurped so many rights over the individual, that the individual is compelled to act in self-defence. There is no question of laws now, their place has been taken by custom, which is to say grimacings, and forms must always be observed."

Lucien started with surprise.

"Ah, my child!" said the priest, afraid that he had shocked Lucien's innocence; "did you expect to find the Angel Gabriel in an Abbé loaded with all the iniquities of the diplomacy and counter-diplomacy of two kings? I am an agent between Ferdinand VII. and Louis XVIII., two—kings who owe their crowns to profound—er—combinations, let us say. I believe in God, but I have a still greater belief in our Order, and our Order has no belief save in temporal power. In order to strengthen and consolidate the temporal power, our Order upholds the Catholic Apostolic and Roman Church, which is to say, the doctrines which dispose the world at large to obedience. We are the Templars of modern times; we have a doctrine of our own. Like the Templars, we have been dispersed, and for the same reasons; we were almost a match for the world. If you will enlist as a soldier, I will be your captain. Obey me as a wife obeys her husband, as a child obeys his

mother, and I will guarantee that you shall be Marquis de Rubempré in less than six months; you shall marry into one of the proudest houses in the Faubourg Saint-Germain, and some day you shall sit on a bench with peers of France. What would you have been at this moment if I had not amused you by my conversation?—An undiscovered corpse in a deep bed of mud. Well and good, now for an effort of imagination——"

Lucien looked curiously at his protector.

"Here, in this calèche beside the Abbé Carlos Herrera, canon of Toledo, secret envoy from His Majesty Ferdinand VII. to His Majesty the King of France, bearer of a despatch thus worded it may be—'When you have delivered me, hang all those whom I favor at this moment, more especially the bearer of this despatch, for then he can tell no tales'—well, beside this envoy sits a young man who has nothing in common with that poet recently deceased. I have fished you out of the water, I have brought you to life again, you belong to me as the creature belongs to the creator, as the efrits of fairy-tales belong to the genii, as the janissary to the Sultan, as the soul to the body. I will sustain you in the way to power with a strong hand; and at the same time I promise that your life shall be a continual course of pleasure, honors, and enjoyment. You shall never want for money. You shall shine, you shall go bravely in the eyes of the world; while I, crouching in the mud, will lay a firm foundation for the brilliant edifice of your fortunes. For I love power for its own sake. I shall always rejoice in your enjoyment, forbidden to me. In short, my self shall become your self! Well, if a day should come when this pact between man and the tempter, this agreement between the child and the diplomatist should no longer suit your ideas, you can still look about for some quiet spot, like that pool of which you were speaking, and drown yourself; you will only be as you are now, or a little more or a little less wretched and dishonored."

"This is not like the Archbishop of Granada's homily," said Lucien as they stopped to change horses.

"Call this concentrated education by what name you will, my son, for you are my son, I adopt you henceforth, and shall make you my heir; it is the Code of ambition. God's elect are few and far between. There is no choice, you must bury yourself in the cloister (and there you very often find the world again in miniature) or accept the Code."

"Perhaps it would be better not to be so wise," said Lucien, trying to fathom this terrible priest.

"What!" rejoined the canon. "You begin to play before you know the rules of the game, and now you throw it up just as your chances are best, and you have a substantial godfather to back you! And you do not even care to play a return match? You do not mean to say that you have no mind to be even with those who drove you from Paris?"

Lucien quivered; the sounds that rang through every nerve seemed to come from some bronze instrument, some Chinese gong.

"I am only a poor priest," returned his mentor, and a grim expression, dreadful to behold, appeared for a moment on a face burned to a copper-red by the sun of Spain, "I am only a poor priest; but if I had been humiliated, vexed, tormented, betrayed, and sold as you have been by the scoundrels of whom you have told me, I should do like an Arab of the desert —I would devote myself body and soul to vengeance. I might end by dangling from a gibbet, garroted, impaled, guillotined in your French fashion, I should not care a rap; but they should not have my head until I had crushed my enemies under my heel."

Lucien was silent; he had no wish to draw the priest out any further.

"Some are descended from Cain and some from Abel," the canon concluded; "I myself am of mixed blood—Cain for my enemies, Abel for my friends. Woe to him that shall awaken Cain! After all, you are a Frenchman; I am a Spaniard, and, what is more, a canon."

"What a Tartar!" thought Lucien, scanning the protector thus sent to him by Heaven.

There was no sign of the Jesuit, nor even of the ecclesiastic, about the Abbé Carlos Herrera. His hands were large, he was thick-set and broad-chested, evidently he possessed the strength of a Hercules; his terrific expression was softened by benignity assumed at will; but a complexion of impenetrable bronze inspired feelings of repulsion rather than attachment for the man.

The strange diplomatist looked somewhat like a bishop, for he wore powder on his long, thick hair, after the fashion of the Prince de Talleyrand; a gold cross, hanging from a strip of blue ribbon with a white border, indicated an ecclesiastical dignitary. The outlines beneath the black silk stockings would not have disgraced an athlete. The exquisite neatness of his clothes and person revealed an amount of care which a simple priest, and, above all, a Spanish priest, does not always take with his appearance. A three-cornered hat lay on the front seat of the carriage, which bore the arms of Spain.

In spite of the sense of repulsion, the effect made by the man's appearance was weakened by his manner, fierce and yet winning as it was; he evidently laid himself out to please Lucien, and the winning manner became almost coaxing. Yet Lucien noticed the smallest trifles uneasily. He felt that the moment of decision had come; they had reached the second stage beyond Ruffec, and the decision meant life or death.

The Spaniard's last words vibrated through many chords in his heart, and, to the shame of both, it must be said that all that was worst in Lucien responded to an appeal deliberately made to his evil impulses, and the eyes that studied the poet's beautiful face had read him very clearly. Lucien beheld Paris once more; in imagination he caught again at the reins of power let fall from his unskilled hands, and he avenged himself! The comparisons which he himself had drawn so lately between the life of Paris and life in the provinces faded from his mind with the more painful motives for suicide; he was about to return to his natural sphere, and

this time with a protector, a political intriguer unscrupulous as Cromwell.

"I was alone, now there will be two of us," he told himself. And then this priest had been more and more interested as he told of his sins one after another. The man's charity had grown with the extent of his misdoings; nothing had astonished this confessor. And yet, what could be the motive of a mover in the intrigues of kings? Lucien at first was fain to be content with the banal answer—the Spanish are a generous race. The Spaniard is generous! even so the Italian is jealous and a poisoner, the Frenchman fickle, the German frank, the Jew ignoble, and the Englishman noble. Reverse these verdicts and you shall arrive within a reasonable distance of the truth! The Jews have monopolized the gold of the world; they compose *Robert the Devil,* act *Phèdre,* sing *William Tell,* give commissions for pictures and build palaces, write *Reisebilder* and wonderful verse; they are more powerful than ever, their religion is accepted, they have lent money to the Holy Father himself! As for Germany, a foreigner is often asked whether he has a contract in writing, and this in the smallest matters, so tricky are they in their dealings. In France the spectacle of national blunders has never lacked national applause for the past fifty years; we continue to wear hats which no mortal can explain, and every change of government is made on the express condition that things shall remain exactly as they were before. England flaunts her perfidy in the face of the world, and her abominable treachery is only equaled by her greed. All the gold of two Indies passed through the hands of Spain, and now she has nothing left. There is no country in the world where poison is so little in request as in Italy, no country where manners are easier or more gentle. As for the Spaniard, he has traded largely on the reputation of the Moor.

As the Canon of Toledo returned to the calèche, he had spoken a word to the post-boy. "Drive post-haste," he said, "and there will be three francs for drink-money for you." Then, seeing that Lucien hesitated, "Come! come!" he ex-

claimed, and Lucien took his place again, telling himself that he meant to try the effect of the *argumentum ad hominem.*

"Father," he began, "after pouring out, with all the coolness in the world, a series of maxims which the vulgar would consider profoundly immoral——"

"And so they are," said the priest; "that is why Jesus Christ said that it must needs be that offences come, my son; and that is why the world displays such horror of offences."

"A man of your stamp will not be surprised by the question which I am about to ask?"

"Indeed, my son, you do not know me," said Carlos Herrera. "Do you suppose that I should engage a secretary unless I knew that I could depend upon his principles sufficiently to be sure that he would not rob me? I like you. You are as innocent in every way as a twenty-year-old suicide. Your question?"

"Why do you take an interest in me? What price do you set on my obedience? Why should you give me everything? What is your share?"

The Spaniard looked at Lucien, and a smile came over his face.

"Let us wait till we come to the next hill; we can walk up and talk out in the open. The back seat of a traveling carriage is not the place for confidences."

They traveled in silence for some time; the rapidity of the movement seemed to increase Lucien's moral intoxication.

"Here is a hill, father," he said at last, awakening from a kind of dream.

"Very well, we will walk." The Abbé called to the postilion to stop, and the two sprang out upon the road.

"You child," said the Spaniard, taking Lucien by the arm, "have you ever thought over Otway's *Venice Preserved?* Did you understand the profound friendship between man and man which binds Pierre and Jaffier each to each so closely that a woman is as nothing in comparison, and all social conditions are changed?—Well, so much for the poet."

"So the canon knows something of the drama," thought Lucien. "Have you read Voltaire?" he asked.

"I have done better," said the other; "I put his doctrine in practice."

"You do not believe in God?"

"Come! it is I who am the atheist, is it?" the Abbé said, smiling. "Let us come to practical matters, my child," he added, putting an arm round Lucien's waist. "I am forty-six years old, I am the natural son of a great lord; consequently, I have no family, and I have a heart. But, learn this, carve it on that still so soft brain of yours—man dreads to be alone. And of all kinds of isolation, inward isolation is the most appalling. The early anchorite lived with God; he dwelt in the spirit world, the most populous world of all. The miser lives in a world of imagination and fruition; his whole life and all that he is, even his sex, lies in the brain. A man's first thought, be he leper or convict, hopelessly sick or degraded, is to find another with a like fate to share it with him. He will exert the utmost that is in him, every power, all his vital energy, to satisfy that craving; it is his very life. But for that tyrannous longing, would Satan have found companions? There is a whole poem yet to be written, a first part of *Paradise Lost;* Milton's poem is only the apology for the revolt."

"It would be the Iliad of Corruption," said Lucien.

"Well, I am alone, I live alone. If I wear the priest's habit, I have not a priest's heart. I like to devote myself to some one; that is my weakness. That is my life, that is how I came to be a priest. I am not afraid of ingratitude, and I am grateful. The Church is nothing to me; it is an idea. I am devoted to the King of Spain, but you cannot give affection to a King of Spain; he is my protector, he towers above me. I want to love my creature, to mould him, fashion him to my use, and love him as a father loves his child. I shall drive in your tilbury, my boy, enjoy your success with women, and say to myself, 'This fine young fellow, this Marquis de Rubempré, my creation whom I have brought into this great world, is my very Self; his greatness is my doing, he speaks or is silent with my voice, he consults me in everything.' The Abbé de Vermont felt thus for Marie-Antoinette."

"He led her to the scaffold."

"He did not love the Queen," said the priest; "*he* only loved the Abbé de Vermont."

"Must I leave desolation behind me?"

"I have money, you shall draw on me."

"I would do a great deal just now to rescue David Séchard," said Lucien, in the tone of one who has given up all idea of suicide.

"Say but one word, my son, and by to-morrow morning he shall have money enough to set him free."

"What! Would you give me twelve thousand francs?"

"Ah! child, do you not see that we are traveling on at the rate of four leagues an hour? We shall dine at Poitiers before long, and there, if you decide to sign the pact, to give me a single proof of obedience, a great proof that I shall require, then the Bordeaux coach shall carry fifteen thousand francs to your sister——"

"Where is the money?"

The Spaniard made no answer, and Lucien said within himself, "There I had him; he was laughing at me."

In another moment they took their places. Neither of them said a word. Silently the Abbé groped in the pocket of the coach, and drew out a traveler's leather pouch with three divisions in it; thence he took a hundred Portuguese moidores, bringing out his large hand filled with gold three times.

"Father, I am yours," said Lucien, dazzled by the stream of gold.

"Child!" said the priest, and set a tender kiss on Lucien's forehead. "There is twice as much still left in the bag, besides the money for traveling expenses."

"And you are traveling alone!" cried Lucien.

"What is that?" asked the Spaniard. "I have more than a hundred thousand crowns in drafts on Paris. A diplomatist without money is in your position of this morning—a poet without a will of his own!"

As Lucien took his place in the calèche beside the so-called Spanish diplomatist, Eve rose to give her child a draught of milk, found the fatal letter in the cradle, and read it. A sudden cold chilled the damps of morning slumber, dizziness came over her, she could not see. She called aloud to Marion and Kolb.

"Has my brother gone out?" she asked, and Kolb answered at once with, "Yes, montame, pefore tay."

"Keep this that I am going to tell you a profound secret," said Eve. "My brother has gone no doubt to make away with himself. Hurry, both of you, make inquiries cautiously, and look along the river."

Eve was left alone in a dull stupor, dreadful to see. Her trouble was at its height when Petit-Claud came in at seven o'clock to talk over the steps to be taken in David's case. At such a time, any voice in the world may speak, and we let them speak.

"Our poor, dear David is in prison, madame," so began Petit-Claud. "I foresaw all along that it would end in this. I advised him at the time to go into partnership with his competitors the Cointets; for while your husband has simply the idea, they have the means of putting it into practical shape. So as soon as I heard of his arrest yesterday evening, what did I do but hurry away to find the Cointets and try to obtain such concessions as might satisfy you. If you try to keep the discovery to yourselves, you will continue to live a life of shifts and chicanery. You must give in, or else when you are exhausted and at the last gasp, you will end by making a bargain with some capitalist or other, and perhaps to your own detriment, whereas to-day I hope to see you make a good one with the MM. Cointet. In this way you will save yourselves the hardships and the misery of the inventor's duel with the greed of the capitalist and the indifference of the public. Let us see! If the MM. Cointet should pay your debts—if, over and above your debts, they should pay you a further sum of money down, whether or no the invention succeeds; while at the same time it is thoroughly understood that if it succeeds a certain proportion of the profits of work-

ing the patent shall be yours, would you not be doing very well?—You yourself, madame, would then be the proprietor of the plant in the printing-office. You would sell the business, no doubt; it is quite worth twenty thousand francs. I will undertake to find you a buyer at that price.

"Now if you draw up a deed of partnership with the MM. Cointet, and receive fifteen thousand francs in money paid down, you will have thirty-five thousand francs of capital; and if you invest it in the funds at the present moment, it will bring you in an income of two thousand francs. You can live on two thousand francs in the provinces. Bear in mind, too, madame, that, given certain contingencies, there will be yet further payments. I say 'contingencies,' because we must lay our accounts with failure.

"Very well," continued Petit-Claud, "now these things I am sure that I can obtain for you. First of all, David's release from prison; secondly, fifteen thousand francs, a premium paid on his discovery, whether the experiments fail or succeed; and lastly, a partnership between David and the MM. Cointet, to be taken out after private experiment made jointly. The deed of partnership for the working of the patent should be drawn up on the following basis: The MM. Cointet to bear all the expenses, the capital invested by David to be confined to the expenses of procuring the patent, and his share of the profits to be fixed at twenty-five per cent. You are a clear-headed and very sensible woman, qualities which are not often found combined with great beauty; think over these proposals, and you will see that they are very favorable."

Poor Eve in her despair burst into tears. "Ah, sir! why did you not come yesterday evening to tell me this? We should have been spared disgrace and—and something far worse——"

"I was talking with the Cointets until midnight. They are behind Métivier, as you must have suspected. But how has something worse than our poor David's arrest happened since yesterday evening?"

"Here is the awful news that I found when I awoke this morning," she said, holding out Lucien's letter. "You have just given me proof of your interest in us; you are David's friend and Lucien's; I need not ask you to keep the secret——"

"You need not feel the least anxiety," said Petit-Claud, as he returned the letter. "Lucien will not take his life. Your husband's arrest was his doing; he was obliged to find some excuse for leaving you, and this exit of his looks to me like a piece of stage business."

The Cointets had gained their ends. They had tormented the inventor and his family, until, worn out by the torture, the victims longed for a respite, and then seized their opportunity and made the offer. Not every inventor has the tenacity of the bull-dog that will perish with his teeth fast set in his capture; the Cointets had shrewdly estimated David's character. The tall Cointet looked upon David's imprisonment as the first scene of the first act of the drama. The second act opened with the proposal which Petit-Claud had just made. As arch-schemer, the attorney looked upon Lucien's frantic folly as a bit of unhoped-for luck, a chance that would finally decide the issues of the day.

Eve was completely prostrated by this event; Petit-Claud saw this, and meant to profit by her despair to win her confidence, for he saw at last how much she influenced her husband. So far from discouraging Eve, he tried to reassure her, and very cleverly diverted her thoughts to the prison. She should persuade David to take the Cointets into partnership.

"David told me, madame, that he only wished for a fortune for your sake and your brother's; but it should be clear to you by now that to try to make a rich man of Lucien would be madness. The youngster would run through three fortunes."

Eve's attitude told plainly enough that she had no more illusions left with regard to her brother. The lawyer waited a little so that her silence should have the weight of consent.

"Things being so, it is now a question of you and your child," he said. "It rests with you to decide whether an income of two thousand francs will be enough for your welfare, to say nothing of old Séchard's property. Your father-in-law's income has amounted to seven or eight thousand francs for a long time past, to say nothing of capital lying out at interest. So, after all, you have a good prospect before you. Why torment yourself?"

Petit-Claud left Eve Séchard to reflect upon this prospect. The whole scheme had been drawn up with no little skill by the tall Cointet the evening before.

"Give them the glimpse of a possibility of money in hand," the lynx had said, when Petit-Claud brought the news of the arrest; "once let them grow accustomed to that idea, and they are ours; we will drive a bargain, and little by little we shall bring them down to our price for the secret."

The argument of the second act of the commercial drama was in a manner summed up in that speech.

Mme. Séchard, heartbroken and full of dread for her brother's fate, dressed and came downstairs. An agony of terror seized her when she thought that she must cross Angoulême alone on the way to the prison. Petit-Claud gave little thought to his fair client's distress. When he came back to offer his arm, it was from a tolerably Machiavellian motive; but Eve gave him credit for delicate consideration, and he allowed her to thank him for it. The little attention, at such a moment, from so hard a man, modified Mme. Séchard's previous opinion of Petit-Claud.

"I am taking you round by the longest way," he said, "and we shall meet nobody."

"For the first time in my life, monsieur, I feel that I have no right to hold up my head before other people; I had a sharp lesson given to me last night——"

"It will be the first and the last."

"Oh! I certainly shall not stay in the town now——"

"Let me know if your husband consents to the proposals that are all but definitely offered by the Cointets," said Petit-

Claud at the gate of the prison; "I will come at once with an order for David's release from Cachan, and in all likelihood he will not go back again to prison."

This suggestion, made on the very threshold of the jail, was a piece of cunning strategy—a *combinazione,* as the Italians call an indefinable mixture of treachery and truth, a cunningly planned fraud which does not break the letter of the law, or a piece of deft trickery for which there is no legal remedy. St. Bartholomew's, for instance, was a political combination.

Imprisonment for debt, for reasons previously explained, is such a rare occurrence in the provinces, that there is no house of detention, and a debtor is perforce imprisoned with the accused, convicted, and condemned—the three graduated subdivisions of the class generically styled criminal. David was put for the time being in a cell on the ground floor from which some prisoner had probably been recently discharged at the end of his time. Once inscribed on the jailer's register, with the amount allowed by the law for a prisoner's board for one month, David confronted a big, stout man, more powerful than the King himself in a prisoner's eyes; this was the jailer.

An instance of a thin jailer is unknown in the provinces. The place, to begin with, is almost a sinecure, and a jailer is a kind of innkeeper who pays no rent and lives very well, while his prisoners fare very ill; for, like an innkeeper, he gives them rooms according to their payments. He knew David by name, and what was more, knew about David's father, and thought that he might venture to let the printer have a good room on credit for one night; for David was penniless.

The prison of Angoulême was built in the Middle Ages, and has no more changed than the old cathedral. It is built against the old *présidial,* or ancient court of appeal, and people still call it the *maison de justice.* It boasts the conventional prison gateway, the solid-looking, nail-studded door, the low, worn archway which the better deserves the qualification "cyclopean," because the jailer's peephole or *judas* looks out like

a single eye from the front of the building. As you enter you find yourself in a corridor which runs across the entire width of the building, with a row of doors of cells that give upon the prison yard and are lighted by high windows covered with a square iron grating. The jailer's house is separated from these cells by an archway in the middle, through which you catch a glimpse of the iron gate of the prison yard. The jailer installed David in a cell next to the archway, thinking that he would like to have a man of David's stamp as a near neighbor for the sake of company.

"This is the best room," he said. David was struck dumb with amazement at the sight of it.

The stone walls were tolerably damp. The windows, set high in the wall, were heavily barred; the stone-paved floor was cold as ice, and from the corridor outside came the sound of the measured tramp of the warder, monotonous as waves on the beach. "You are a prisoner! you are watched and guarded!" said the footsteps at every moment of every hour. All these small things together produce a prodigious effect upon the minds of honest folk. David saw that the bed was execrable, but the first night in a prison is full of violent agitation, and only on the second night does the prisoner notice that his couch is hard. The jailer was graciously disposed; he naturally suggested that his prisoner should walk in the yard until nightfall.

David's hour of anguish only began when he was locked into his cell for the night. Lights are not allowed in the cells. A prisoner detained on arrest used to be subjected to rules devised for malefactors, unless he brought a special exemption signed by the public prosecutor. The jailer certainly might allow David to sit by his fire, but the prisoner must go back to his cell at locking-up time. Poor David learned the horrors of prison life by experience, the rough coarseness of the treatment revolted him. Yet a revulsion, familiar to those who live by thought, passed over him. He detached himself from his loneliness, and found a way of escape in a poet's waking dream.

At last the unhappy man's thoughts turned to his own affairs. The stimulating influence of a prison upon conscience and self-scrutiny is immense. David asked himself whether he had done his duty as the head of a family. What despairing grief his wife must feel at this moment! Why had he not done as Marion had said, and earned money enough to pursue his investigations at leisure?

"How can I stay in Angoulême after such a disgrace? And when I come out of prison, what will become of us? Where shall we go?"

Doubts as to his process began to occur to him, and he passed through an agony which none save inventors can understand. Going from doubt to doubt, David began to see his real position more clearly; and to himself he said, as the Cointets had said to old Séchard, as Petit-Claud had just said to Eve, "Suppose that all should go well, what does it amount to in practice? The first thing to be done is to take out a patent, and money is needed for that—and experiments must be tried on a large scale in a paper-mill, which means that the discovery must pass into other hands. Oh! Petit-Claud was right!"

A very vivid light sometimes dawns in the darkest prison.

"Pshaw!" said David; "I shall see Petit-Claud to-morrow no doubt," and he turned and slept on the filthy mattress covered with coarse brown sacking.

So when Eve unconsciously played into the hands of the enemy that morning, she found her husband more than ready to listen to the proposals. She put her arms about him and kissed him, and sat down on the edge of the bed (for there was but one chair of the poorest and commonest kind in the cell). Her eyes fell on the unsightly pail in a corner, and over the walls covered with inscriptions left by David's predecessors, and tears filled the eyes that were red with weeping. She had sobbed long and very bitterly, but the sight of her husband in a felon's cell drew fresh tears.

"And the desire of fame may lead one to this!" she cried. "Oh! my angel, give up your career. Let us walk together

along the beaten track; we will not try to make haste to be rich, David. . . . I need very little to be very happy, especially now, after all that we have been through. . . . And if you only knew—the disgrace of arrest is not the worst. . . . Look."

She held out Lucien's letter, and when David had read it, she tried to comfort him by repeating Petit-Claud's bitter comment.

"If Lucien has taken his life, the thing is done by now," said David; "if he has not made away with himself by this time, he will not kill himself. As he himself says, 'his courage cannot last longer than a morning——'"

"But the suspense!" cried Eve, forgiving almost everything at the thought of death. Then she told her husband of the proposals which Petit-Claud professed to have received from the Cointets. David accepted them at once with manifest pleasure.

"We shall have enough to live upon in a village near L'Houmeau, where the Cointets' paper-mill stands. I want nothing now but a quiet life," said David. "If Lucien has punished himself by death, we can wait so long as father lives; and if Lucien is still living, poor fellow, he will learn to adapt himself to our narrow ways. The Cointets certainly will make money by my discovery; but, after all, what am I compared with our country? One man in it, that is all; and if the whole country is benefited, I shall be content. There! dear Eve, neither you nor I were meant to be successful in business. We do not care enough about making a profit; we have not the dogged objection to parting with our money, even when it is legally owing, which is a kind of virtue of the counting-house, for these two sorts of avarice are called prudence and a faculty of business."

Eve felt overjoyed; she and her husband held the same views, and this is one of the sweetest flowers of love; for two human beings who love each other may not be of the same mind, nor take the same view of their interests. She wrote to Petit-Claud telling him that they both consented to the

general scheme, and asked him to release David. Then she begged the jailer to deliver the message.

Ten minutes later Petit-Claud entered the dismal place. "Go home, madame," he said, addressing Eve, "we will follow you.—Well, my dear friend" (turning to David), "so you allowed them to catch you! Why did you come out? How came you to make such a mistake?"

"Eh! how could I do otherwise? Look at this letter that Lucien wrote."

David held out a sheet of paper. It was Cérizet's forged letter.

Petit-Claud read it, looked at it, fingered the paper as he talked, and still talking, presently, as if through absence of mind, folded it up and put it in his pocket. Then he linked his arm in David's, and they went out together, the order for release having come during the conversation.

It was like heaven to David to be at home again. He cried like a child when he took little Lucien in his arms and looked round his room after three weeks of imprisonment, and the disgrace, according to provincial notions, of the last few hours. Kolb and Marion had come back. Marion had heard in L'Houmeau that Lucien had been seen walking along on the Paris road, somewhere beyond Marsac. Some country folk, coming in to market, had noticed his fine clothes. Kolb, therefore, had set out on horseback along the highroad, and heard at last at Mansle that Lucien was traveling post in a calèche—M. Marron had recognized him as he passed.

"What did I tell you?" said Petit-Claud. "That fellow is not a poet; he is a romance in heaven knows how many chapters."

"Traveling post!" repeated Eve. "Where can he be going this time?"

"Now go to see the Cointets, they are expecting you," said Petit-Claud, turning to David.

"Ah, monsieur!" cried the beautiful Eve, "pray do your best for our interests; our whole future lies in your hands."

"If you prefer it, madame, the conference can be held here.

I will leave David with you. The Cointets will come this evening, and you shall see if I can defend your interests."

"Ah! monsieur, I should be very glad," said Eve.

"Very well," said Petit-Claud; "this evening, at seven o'clock."

"Thank you," said Eve; and from her tone and glance Petit-Claud knew that he had made great progress in his fair client's confidence.

"You have nothing to fear; you see I was right," he added. "Your brother is a hundred miles away from suicide, and when all comes to all, perhaps you will have a little fortune this evening. A *bonâ-fide* purchaser for the business has turned up."

"If that is the case," said Eve, "why should we not wait awhile before binding ourselves to the Cointets?"

Petit-Claud saw the danger. "You are forgetting, madame," he said, "that you cannot sell your business until you have paid M. Métivier; for a distress warrant has been issued."

As soon as Petit-Claud reached home he sent for Cérizet, and when the printer's foreman appeared, drew him into the embrasure of the window.

"To-morrow evening," he said, "you will be the proprietor of the Séchards' printing-office, and then there are those behind you who have influence enough to transfer the license;" (then in a lowered voice), "but you have no mind to end in the hulks, I suppose?"

"The hulks! What's that? What's that?"

"Your letter to David was a forgery. It is in my possession. What would Henriette say in a court of law? I do not want to ruin you," he added hastily, seeing how white Cérizet's face grew.

"You want something more of me?" cried Cérizet.

"Well, here it is," said Petit-Claud. "Follow me carefully. You will be a master printer in Angoulême in two months' time . . . but you will not have paid for your business—you will not pay for it in ten years. You will work a long

while yet for those that have lent you the money, and you will be the cat's-paw of the Liberal party. . . . Now *I* shall draw up your agreement with Gannerac, and I can draw it up in such a way that you will have the business in your own hands one of these days. But—if the Liberals start a paper, if you bring it out, and if I am deputy public prosecutor, then you will come to an understanding with the Cointets and publish articles of such a nature that they will have the paper suppressed. . . . The Cointets will pay you handsomely for that service. . . . I know, of course, that you will be condemned and live on prison fare for awhile, but you will be a hero, a victim of persecution; you will be a personage among the Liberals—a Sergeant Mercier, a Paul-Louis Courier, a Manuel on a small scale. I will take care that they leave you your license. In fact, on the day when the newspaper is suppressed, I will burn this letter before your eyes. . . . Your fortune will not cost you much."

A working man has the haziest notions as to the law with regard to forgery; and Cérizet, who beheld himself already in the dock, breathed again.

"In three years' time," continued Petit-Claud, "I shall be public prosecutor in Angoulême. You may have need of me some day; bear that in mind."

"It's agreed," said Cérizet, "but you don't know me. Burn that letter now and trust to my gratitude."

Petit-Claud looked Cérizet in the face. It was a duel in which one man's gaze is a scalpel with which he essays to probe the soul of another, and the eyes of that other are a theatre, as it were, to which all his virtue is summoned for display.

Petit-Claud did not utter a word. He lighted a taper and burned the letter. "He has his way to make," he said to himself.

"Here is one that will go through fire and water for you," said Cérizet.

David awaited the interview with the Cointets with a vague

feeling of uneasiness; not, however, on account of the proposed partnership, nor for his own interests—he felt nervous as to their opinion of his work. He was in something the same position as a dramatic author before his judges. The inventor's pride in the discovery so nearly completed left no room for any other feelings.

At seven o'clock that evening, while Mme. du Châtelet, pleading a sick headache, had gone to her room in her unhappiness over the rumors of Lucien's departure; while M. le Comte, left to himself, was entertaining his guests at dinner—the tall Cointet and his stout brother, accompanied by Petit-Claud, opened negotiations with the competitor who had delivered himself up, bound hand and foot.

A difficulty awaited them at the outset. How was it possible to draw up a deed of partnership unless they knew David's secret? And if David divulged his secret, he would be at the mercy of the Cointets. Petit-Claud arranged that the deed of partnership should be the first drawn up. Thereupon the tall Cointet asked to see some specimens of David's work, and David brought out the last sheet that he had made, guaranteeing the price of production.

"Well," said Petit-Claud, "there you have the basis of the agreement ready made. You can go into partnership on the strength of those samples, inserting a clause to protect yourselves in case the conditions of the patent are not fulfilled in the manufacturing process."

"It is one thing to make samples of paper on a small scale in your own room with a small mould, monsieur, and another to turn out a quantity," said the tall Cointet, addressing David. "Quite another thing, as you may judge from this single fact. We manufacture colored papers. We buy parcels of coloring absolutely identical. Every cake of indigo used for 'blueing' our post-demy is taken from a batch supplied by the same maker. Well, we have never yet been able to obtain two batches of precisely the same shade. There are variations in the material which we cannot detect. The quantity and the quality of the pulp modify every question at

once. Suppose that you have in a cauldron a quantity of ingredients of some kind (I don't ask to know what they are), you can do as you like with them, the treatment can be uniformly applied, you can manipulate, knead, and pestle the mass at your pleasure until you have a homogeneous substance. But who will guarantee that it will be the same with a batch of five hundred reams, and that your plan will succeed in bulk?"

David, Eve, and Petit-Claud looked at one another; their eyes said many things.

"Take a somewhat similar case," continued the tall Cointet after a pause. "You cut two or three trusses of meadow hay, and store it in a loft before 'the heat is out of the grass,' as the peasants say; the hay ferments, but no harm comes of it. You follow up your experiment by storing a couple of thousand trusses in a wooden barn—and, of course, the hay smoulders, and the barn blazes up like a lighted match. You are an educated man," continued Cointet; "you can see the application for yourself. So far, you have only cut your two trusses of hay; we are afraid of setting fire to our paper-mill by bringing in a couple of thousand trusses. In other words, we may spoil more than one batch, make heavy losses, and find ourselves none the better for laying out a good deal of money."

David was completely floored by this reasoning. Practical wisdom spoke in matter-of-fact language to theory, whose word is always for the future.

"Devil fetch me, if I'll sign such a deed of partnership!" the stout Cointet cried bluntly. "You may throw away your money if you like, Boniface; as for me, I shall keep mine. Here is my offer—to pay M. Séchard's debts *and* six thousand francs, and another three thousand francs in bills at twelve and fifteen months," he added. "That will be quite enough risk to run.—We have a balance of twelve thousand francs against Métivier. That will make fifteen thousand francs.—That is all that I would pay for the secret if I were going to exploit it for myself. So this is the great discovery that

you were talking about, Boniface! Many thanks! I thought you had more sense. No, you can't call this business."

"The question for you," said Petit-Claud, undismayed by the explosion, "resolves itself into this: 'Do you care to risk twenty thousand francs to buy a secret that may make rich men of you?' Why, the risk usually is in proportion to the profit, gentlemen. You stake twenty thousand francs on your luck. A gambler puts down a louis at roulette for a chance of winning thirty-six, but he knows that the louis is lost. Do the same."

"I must have time to think it over," said the stout Cointet; "I am not so clever as my brother. I am a plain, straightforward sort of chap, that only knows one thing—how to print prayer-books at twenty sous and sell them for two francs. Where I see an invention that has only been tried once, I see ruin. You succeed with the first batch, you spoil the next, you go on, and you are drawn in; for once put an arm into that machinery, the rest of you follows," and he related an anecdote very much to the point—how a Bordeaux merchant had ruined himself by following a scientific man's advice, and trying to bring the Landes into cultivation; and followed up the tale with half-a-dozen similar instances of agricultural and commercial failures nearer home in the departments of the Charente and Dordogne. He waxed warm over his recitals. He would not listen to another word. Petit-Claud's demurs, so far from soothing the stout Cointet, appeared to irritate him.

"I would rather give more for a certainty, if I made only a small profit on it," he said, looking at his brother. "It is my opinion that things have not gone far enough for business," he concluded.

"Still you came here for something, didn't you?" asked Petit-Claud. "What is your offer?"

"I offer to release M. Séchard, and, if his plan succeeds, to give him thirty per cent. of the profits," the stout Cointet answered briskly.

"But, monsieur," objected Eve, "how should we live while

the experiments were being made? My husband has endured the disgrace of imprisonment already; he may as well go back to prison, it makes no difference now, and we will pay our debts ourselves——"

Petit-Claud laid a finger on his lips in warning.

"You are unreasonable," said he, addressing the brothers. "You have seen the paper; M. Séchard's father told you that he had shut his son up, and that he had made capital paper in a single night from materials that must have cost a mere nothing. You are here to make an offer. Are you purchasers, yes or no?"

"Stay," said the tall Cointet, "whether my brother is willing or no, I will risk this much myself. I will pay M. Séchard's debts, I will pay down six thousand francs over and above the debts, and M. Séchard shall have thirty per cent of the profits. But mind this—if in the space of one year he fails to carry out the undertakings which he himself will make in the deed of partnership, he must return the six thousand francs, and we shall keep the patent and extricate ourselves as best we may."

"Are you sure of yourself?" asked Petit-Claud, taking David aside.

"Yes," said David. He was deceived by the tactics of the brothers, and afraid lest the stout Cointet should break off the negotiations on which his future depended.

"Very well, I will draft the deed," said Petit-Claud, addressing the rest of the party. "Each of you shall have a copy to-night, and you will have all to-morrow morning in which to think it over. To-morrow afternoon at four o'clock, when the court rises, you will sign the agreement. You, gentlemen, will withdraw Métivier's suit, and I, for my part, will write to stop proceedings in the Court-Royal; we will give notice on either side that the affair has been settled out of court."

David Séchard's undertakings were thus worded in the deed:—

"M. David Séchard, printer of Angoulême, affirming that

he has discovered a method of sizing paper-pulp in the vat, and also a method of effecting a reduction of fifty per cent in the price of all kinds of manufactured papers, by introducing certain vegetable substances into the pulp, either by intermixture of such substances with the rags already in use, or by employing them solely without the addition of rags: a partnership for working the patent to be presently applied for is entered upon by M. David Séchard and the firm of Cointet Brothers, subject to the following conditional clauses and stipulations."

One of the clauses was so drafted that David Séchard forfeited all his rights if he failed to fulfil his engagements within the year; the tall Cointet was particularly careful to insert that clause, and David Séchard allowed it to pass.

When Petit-Claud appeared with a copy of the agreement next morning at half-past seven o'clock, he brought news for David and his wife. Cérizet offered twenty-two thousand francs for the business. The whole affair could be signed and settled in the course of the evening. "But if the Cointets knew about it," he added, "they would be quite capable of refusing to sign the deed of partnership, of harassing you, and selling you up."

"Are you sure of payment?" asked Eve. She had thought it hopeless to try to sell the business; and now, to her astonishment, a bargain which would have been their salvation three months ago was concluded in this summary fashion.

"The money has been deposited with me," he answered succinctly.

"Why, here is magic at work!" said David, and he asked Petit-Claud for an explanation of this piece of luck.

"No," said Petit-Claud, "it is very simple. The merchants in L'Houmeau want a newspaper."

"But I am bound not to publish a paper," said David.

"Yes, you are bound, but is your successor?—However it is," he continued, "do not trouble yourself at all; sell the business, pocket the proceeds, and leave Cérizet to find his

way through the conditions of sale—he can take care of himself."

"Yes," said Eve.

"And if it turns out that you may not print a newspaper in Angoulême," said Petit-Claud, "those who are finding the capital for Cérizet will bring out the paper in L'Houmeau."

The prospect of twenty-two thousand francs, of want now at end, dazzled Eve. The partnership and its hopes took a second place. And, therefore, M. and Mme. Séchard gave way on a final point of dispute. The tall Cointet insisted that the patent should be taken out in his name. He established beyond cavil that David's rights were perfectly defined in the deed of partnership, and that therefore the patent might be taken out in the name of any one of the partners. What difference could it make? The stout Cointet said the last word.

"He is finding the money for the patent; he is bearing the expenses of the journey—another two thousand francs over and above the rest of the expenses. He must take it out in his own name, or we will not stir in the matter."

The lynx gained a victory at all points. The deed of partnership was signed that afternoon at half-past four.

The tall Cointet politely gave Mme. Séchard a dozen thread-pattern forks and spoons and a beautiful Ternaux shawl, by way of pin-money, said he, and to efface any unpleasant impression made in the heat of discussion. The copies of the draft had scarcely been made out, Cachan had barely had time to send the documents to Petit-Claud, together with the three unlucky forged bills, when the Séchards heard a deafening rumble in the street, a dray from the Messageries stopped before the door, and Kolb's voice made the staircase ring again.

"Montame! montame! vifteen tausend vrancs, vrom Boidiers" (Poitiers). "Goot money! vrom Monziere Lucien!"

"Fifteen thousand francs!" cried Eve, throwing up her arms.

"Yes, madame," said the carman in the doorway, "fifteen thousand francs, brought by the Bordeaux coach, and they didn't want any more neither! I have two men downstairs bringing up the bags. M. Lucien Chardon de Rubempré is the sender. I have brought up a little leather bag for you, containing five hundred francs in gold, and a letter it's likely."

Eve thought that she must be dreaming as she read:—

"My dear Sister,—Here are fifteen thousand francs. Instead of taking my life, I have sold it. I am no longer my own; I am only the secretary of a Spanish diplomatist; I am his creature. A new and dreadful life is beginning for me. Perhaps I should have done better to drown myself.

"Good-bye. David will be released, and with the four thousand francs he can buy a little paper-mill, no doubt, and make his fortune. Forget me, all of you. This is the wish of your unhappy brother. Lucien."

"It is decreed that my poor boy should be unlucky in everything, and even when he does well, as he said himself," said Mme. Chardon, as she watched the men piling up the bags.

"We have had a narrow escape!" exclaimed the tall Cointet, when he was once in the Place du Mûrier. "An hour later the glitter of the silver would have thrown a new light on the deed of partnership. Our man would have fought shy of it. We have his promise now, and in three months' time we shall know what to do."

That very evening, at seven o'clock, Cérizet bought the business, and the money was paid over, the purchaser undertaking to pay rent for the last quarter. The next day Eve sent forty thousand francs to the Receiver-General, and bought two thousand five hundred francs of *rentes* in her husband's name. Then she wrote to her father-in-law and asked him to find a small farm, worth about ten thousand francs, for her near Marsac. She meant to invest her own fortune in this way.

The tall Cointet's plot was formidably simple. From the very first he considered that the plan of sizing the pulp in the vat was impracticable. The real secret of fortune lay in the composition of the pulp, in the cheap vegetable fibre as a substitute for rags. He made up his mind, therefore, to lay immense stress on the secondary problem of sizing the pulp, and to pass over the discovery of cheap raw material, and for the following reasons:

The Angoulême paper-mills manufacture paper for stationers. Notepaper, foolscap, crown, and post-demy are all necessarily sized; and these papers have been the pride of the Angoulême mills for a long while past, stationery being the specialty of the Charente. This fact gave color to the Cointets' urgency upon the point of sizing in the pulping-trough; but, as a matter of fact, they cared nothing for this part of David's researches. The demand for writing-paper is exceedingly small compared with the almost unlimited demand for unsized paper for printers. As Boniface Cointet traveled to Paris to take out the patent in his own name, he was projecting plans that were like to work a revolution in his paper-mill. Arrived in Paris, he took up his quarters with Métivier, and gave his instructions to his agent. Métivier was to call upon the proprietors of newspapers, and offer to deliver paper at prices below those quoted by all other houses; he could guarantee in each case that the paper should be a better color, and in every way superior to the best kinds hitherto in use. Newspapers are always supplied by contract; there would be time before the present contracts expired to complete all the subterranean operations with buyers, and to obtain a monopoly of the trade. Cointet calculated that he could rid himself of Séchard while Métivier was taking orders from the principal Paris newspapers, which even then consumed two hundred reams daily. Cointet naturally offered Métivier a large commission on the contracts, for he wished to secure a clever representative on the spot, and to waste no time in traveling to and fro. And in this manner the fortunes of the firm of Métivier, one of the largest houses in the paper trade, were

founded. The tall Cointet went back to Angoulême to be present at Petit-Claud's wedding, with a mind at rest as to the future.

Petit-Claud had sold his professional connection, and was only waiting for M. Milaud's promotion to take the public prosecutor's place, which had been promised to him by the Comtesse du Châtelet. The public prosecutor's second deputy was appointed first deputy to the Court of Limoges, the Keeper of the Seals sent a man of his own to Angoulême, and the post of first deputy was kept vacant for a couple of months. The interval was Petit-Claud's honeymoon.

While Boniface Cointet was in Paris, David made a first experimental batch of unsized paper far superior to that in common use for newspapers. He followed it up with a second batch of magnificent vellum paper for fine printing, and this the Cointets used for a new edition of their diocesan prayer-book. The material had been privately prepared by David himself; he would have no helpers but Kolb and Marion.

When Boniface came back the whole affair wore a different aspect; he looked at the samples, and was fairly satisfied.

"My good friend," he said, "the whole trade of Angoulême is in crown paper. We must make the best possible crown paper at half the present price; that is the first and foremost question for us."

Then David tried to size the pulp for the desired paper, and the result was a harsh surface with grains of size distributed all over it. On the day when the experiment was concluded and David held the sheets in his hand, he went away to find a spot where he could be alone and swallow his bitter disappointment. But Boniface Cointet went in search of him and comforted him. Boniface was delightfully amiable.

"Do not lose heart," he said; "go on! I am a good fellow, I understand you; I will stand by you to the end."

"Really," David said to his wife at dinner, "we are with good people; I should not have expected that the tall Cointet would be so generous." And he repeated his conversation with his wily partner.

Three months were spent in experiments. David slept at the mill; he noted the effects of various preparations upon the pulp. At one time he attributed his non-success to an admixture of rag-pulp with his own ingredients, and made a batch entirely composed of the new material; at another, he endeavored to size pulp made exclusively from rags; persevering in his experiments under the eyes of the tall Cointet, whom he had ceased to mistrust, until he had tried every possible combination of pulp and size. David lived in the paper-mill for the first six months of 1823—if it can be called living, to leave food untasted, and go in neglect of person and dress. He wrestled so desperately with the difficulties, that anybody but the Cointets would have seen the sublimity of the struggle, for the brave fellow was not thinking of his own interests. The moment had come when he cared for nothing but the victory. With marvelous sagacity he watched the unaccountable freaks of the semi-artificial substances called into existence by man for ends of his own; substances in which nature had been tamed, as it were, and her tacit resistance overcome; and from these observations drew great conclusions; finding, as he did, that such creations can only be obtained by following the laws of the more remote affinities of things, of "a second nature," as he called it, in substances.

Towards the end of August he succeeded to some extent in sizing the paper pulp in the vat; the result being a kind of paper identical with a make in use for printers' proofs at the present day—a kind of paper that cannot be depended upon, for the sizing itself is not always certain. This was a great result, considering the condition of the paper trade in 1823, and David hoped to solve the final difficulties of the problem, but—it had cost ten thousand francs.

Singular rumors were current at this time in Angoulême and L'Houmeau. It was said that David Séchard was ruining the firm of Cointet Brothers. Experiments had eaten up twenty thousand francs; and the result, said gossip, was wretchedly bad paper. Other manufacturers took fright at this, hugged themselves on their old-fashioned methods, and,

being jealous of the Cointets, spread rumors of the approaching fall of that ambitious house. As for the tall Cointet, he set up the new machinery for making lengths of paper in a ribbon, and allowed people to believe that he was buying plant for David's experiments. Then the cunning Cointet used David's formula for pulp, while urging his partner to give his whole attention to the sizing process; and thousands of reams of the new paper were despatched to Métivier in Paris.

When September arrived, the tall Cointet took David aside, and, learning that the latter meditated a crowning experiment, dissuaded him from further attempts.

"Go to Marsac, my dear David, see your wife, and take a rest after your labors; we don't want to ruin ourselves," said Cointet in the friendliest way. "This great triumph of yours, after all, is only a starting-point. We shall wait now for awhile before trying any new experiments. To be fair! see what has come of them. We are not merely paper-makers, we are printers besides and bankers, and people say that you are ruining us."

David Séchard's gesture of protest on behalf of his good faith was sublime in its simplicity.

"Not that fifty thousand francs thrown into the Charente would ruin us," said Cointet, in reply to the mute protest, "but we do not wish to be obliged to pay cash for everything in consequence of slanders that shake our credit; *that* would bring us to a standstill. We have reached the term fixed by our agreement, and we are bound on either side to think over our position."

"He is right," thought David. He had forgotten the routine work of the business, thoroughly absorbed as he had been in experiments on a large scale.

David went to Marsac. For the past six months he had gone over on Saturday evening, returning again to L'Houmeau on Tuesday morning. Eve, after much counsel from her father-in-law, had bought a house called the Verberie, with three acres of land and a croft planted with vines, which lay like a wedge in the old man's vineyard. Here, with her

mother and Marion, she lived a very frugal life, for five thousand francs of the purchase money still remained unpaid. It was a charming little domain, the prettiest bit of property in Marsac. The house, with a garden before it and a yard at the back, was built of white tufa ornamented with carvings, cut without great expense in that easily wrought stone, and roofed with slate. The pretty furniture from the house in Angoulême looked prettier still at Marsac, for there was not the slightest attempt at comfort or luxury in the country in those days. A row of orange-trees, pomegranates, and rare plants stood before the house on the side of the garden, set there by the last owner, an old general who died under M. Marron's hands.

David was enjoying his holiday sitting under an orange-tree with his wife, and father, and little Lucien, when the bailiff from Mansle appeared. Cointet Brothers gave their partner formal notice to appoint an arbitrator to settle disputes, in accordance with a clause in the agreement. The Cointets demanded that the six thousand francs should be refunded, and the patent surrendered in consideration of the enormous outlay made to no purpose.

"People say that you are ruining them," said old Séchard. "Well, well, of all that you have done, that is the one thing that I am glad to know."

At nine o'clock the next morning Eve and David stood in Petit-Claud's waiting-room. The little lawyer was the guardian of the widow and orphan by virtue of his office, and it seemed to them that they could take no other advice. Petit-Claud was delighted to see his clients, and insisted that M. and Mme. Séchard should do him the pleasure of breakfasting with him.

"Do the Cointets want six thousand francs of you?" he asked, smiling. "How much is still owing of the purchase-money of the Verberie?"

"Five thousand francs, monsieur," said Eve, "but I have two thousand——"

"Keep your money," Petit-Claud broke in. "Let us see,

five thousand—why, you want quite another ten thousand francs to settle yourselves comfortably down yonder. Very good, in two hours' time the Cointets shall bring you fifteen thousand francs——"

Eve started with surprise.

"If you will renounce all claims to the profits under the deed of partnership, and come to an amicable settlement," said Petit-Claud. "Does that suit you?"

"Will it really be lawfully ours?" asked Eve.

"Very much so," said the lawyer, smiling. "The Cointets have worked you trouble enough; I should like to make an end of their pretensions. Listen to me; I am a magistrate now, and it is my duty to tell you the truth. Very good. The Cointets are playing you false at this moment, but you are in their hands. If you accept battle, you might possibly gain the lawsuit which they will bring. Do you wish to be where you are now after ten years of litigation? Experts' fees and expenses of arbitration will be multiplied, the most contradictory opinions will be given, and you must take your chance. And," he added, smiling again, "there is no attorney here that can defend you, so far as I see. My successor has not much ability. There, a bad compromise is better than a successful lawsuit."

"Any arrangement that will give us a quiet life will do for me," said David.

Petit-Claud called to his servant.

"Paul! go and ask M. Ségaud, my successor, to come here.—He shall go to see the Cointets while we breakfast," said Petit-Claud, addressing his former clients, "and in a few hours' time you will be on your way home to Marsac, ruined, but with minds at rest. Ten thousand francs will bring you in another five hundred francs of income, and you will live comfortably on your bit of property."

Two hours later, as Petit-Claud had prophesied, Maître Ségaud came back with an agreement duly drawn up and signed by the Cointets, and fifteen notes each for a thousand francs.

"We are much indebted to you," said Séchard, turning to Petit-Claud.

"Why, I have just this moment ruined you," said Petit-Claud, looking at his astonished former clients. "I tell you again, I have ruined you, as you will see as time goes on; but I know you, you would rather be ruined than wait for a fortune which perhaps might come too late."

"We are not mercenary, monsieur," said Madame Eve. "We thank you for giving us the means of happiness; we shall always feel grateful to you."

"Great heavens! don't call down blessings on *me!*" cried Petit-Claud. "It fills me with remorse; but to-day, I think, I have made full reparation. If I am a magistrate, it is entirely owing to you; and if anybody is to feel grateful, it is I. Good-bye."

As time went on, Kolb changed his opinion of Séchard senior; and as for the old man, he took a liking to Kolb when he found that, like himself, the Alsacien could neither write nor read a word, and that it was easy to make him tipsy. The old "bear" imparted his ideas on vine culture and the sale of a vintage to the ex-cuirassier, and trained him with a view to leaving a man with a head on his shoulders to look after his children when he should be gone; for he grew childish at the last, and great were his fears as to the fate of his property. He had chosen Courtois the miller as his confidant. "You will see how things will go with my children when I am under ground. Lord! it makes me shudder to think of it."

Old Séchard died in the month of March, 1829, leaving about two hundred thousand francs in land. His acres added to the Verberie made a fine property, which Kolb had managed to admiration for some two years.

David and his wife found nearly a hundred thousand crowns in gold in the house. The department of the Charente had valued old Séchard's money at a million; rumor, as usual, exaggerating the amount of a hoard. Eve and David had barely thirty thousand francs of income when

they added their little fortune to the inheritance; they waited awhile, and so it fell out that they invested their capital in Government securities at the time of the Revolution of July.

Then, and not until then, could the department of the Charente and David Séchard form some idea of the wealth of the tall Cointet. Rich to the extent of several millions of francs, the elder Cointet became a deputy, and is at this day a peer of France. It is said that he will be Minister of Commerce in the next Government; for in 1842 he married Mlle. Popinot, daughter of M. Anselme Popinot, one of the most influential statesmen of the dynasty, deputy and mayor of an arrondissement in Paris.

David Séchard's discovery has been assimilated by the French manufacturing world, as food is assimilated by a living body. Thanks to the introduction of materials other than rags, France can produce paper more cheaply than any other European country. Dutch paper, as David foresaw, no longer exists. Sooner or later it will be necessary, no doubt, to establish a Royal Paper Manufactory; like the Gobelins, the Sèvres porcelain works, the Savonnerie, and the Imprimerie royale, which so far have escaped the destruction threatened by bourgeois vandalism.

David Séchard, beloved by his wife, father of two boys and a girl, has the good taste to make no allusion to his past efforts. Eve had the sense to dissuade him from following his terrible vocation; for the inventor, like Moses on Mount Horeb, is consumed by the burning bush. He cultivates literature by way of recreation, and leads a comfortable life of leisure, befitting the landowner who lives on his own estate. He has bidden farewell for ever to glory, and bravely taken his place in the class of dreamers and collectors; for he dabbles in entomology, and is at present investigating the transformations of insects which science only knows in the final stage.

Everybody has heard of Petit-Claud's success as attorney-general; he is the rival of the great Vinet of Provins, and it is his ambition to be President of the Court-Royal of Poitiers.

Cérizet has been in trouble so frequently for political offences that he has been a good deal talked about; and as one of the boldest *enfants perdus* of the Liberal party he was nicknamed the "Brave Cérizet." When Petit-Claud's successor compelled him to sell his business in Angoulême, he found a fresh career on the provincial stage, where his talents as an actor were like to be turned to brilliant account. The chief stage heroine, however, obliged him to go to Paris to find a cure for love among the resources of science, and there he tried to curry favor with the Liberal party.

As for Lucien, the story of his return to Paris belongs to the *Scenes of Parisian Life.*